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LIFE AND TEACHING

OF

JOHN RUSKIN.

BY

J. MARSHALL MATHER,

Member of the Ruskin Society.

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PREFACE.

THIS book is neither a criticism nor a defence, but a brief exposition of the teachings of John Ruskin.

The greater portion of it constituted a series of Lectures prepared for several of the Literary and Debating Societies in Manchester, and the arrangement is, in the main, that adopted in the Lectures. They were especially addressed to those who were seeking information about John Ruskin and his teachings, and this accounts for their elementary character. There is also a predilection about them which some may blame; the only reason I assign for this, is, that for ten years, the writings of John Ruskin have been to me a source of unspeakable delight, the secret of not a little of my endeavour, and the chief suggestive element of much of my thinking. Most men recognise a Master—or, at least, are indebted to some one teacher more than to all others—and there is, no doubt, a danger on their part of over-estimating, or exclusively estimating such Master.

To those who purpose a study of Ruskin's works, and would use this book as their guide, the following information as to further reference may be of service:—

Facts concerning the Life of John Ruskin:—see "Fors Clavigera."

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Examples of Early Literary Work :—"Poems," by John Ruskin, republished in America.

System of Education :—"Sesame and Lilies," "A Joy for Ever," and "Fors Clavigera."

Elements of Social Science :—"Time and Tide," and "Fors Clavigera."

Art :—"Modern Painters," "Oxford Lectures," and "Laws of Fésole."

Architecture :—"Seven Lamps of Architecture," and "Stones of Venice."

Political Economy :—"Unto this Last," "Munera Pulveris," and "Fors Clavigera."

Examples of Literary Style :—"Frondes Agrestes" (selections from "Modern Painters").

I would also recommend the admirable critique by Dr. Bayne in "Lessons from My Masters," as well as Mr. Axon's exhaustive Lecture on the "Bibliography of Ruskin."

Oakley Manse, Rawtenstall,
October 12th, 1883.

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JOHN RUSKIN.

CHAPTER I.

Parentage, Youth, Manhood.

THERE can be no doubt that both intellectual and moral greatness are largely hereditary; and that education, apart from the great laws of selection and development, is well-nigh powerless as a factor in the improvement of the race. There are processes by which the impurities in a vessel may be drawn from the surface, and the liquid apparently clarified; but unless the impurities be wholly removed the slightest shock will disturb and diffuse. Education is an instrument only, and its powers are limited by the potentialities of the material upon which it is brought to bear. Training goes for little so long as the sources of the race's degeneracy are unremoved; for manhood is more than the product of a curriculum, it is the accumulated fruit of generations of worth. Stock is ever of primary importance; and though all great sons have not had great fathers, yet the germ of their greatness lies somewhere in their families' past. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit; and while a corrupt nature may receive the adornment of culture, yet, be it ever remembered, that which is educed, not that which is attached, constitutes the foundation of intellectual and moral worth. Hence, one of the most radical questions concerning a man is,—What is his ancestry? and thorough-going reformers and keen students of human

nature, alike, trace the antecedents of those whom they seek to elevate and understand.

Though we cannot trace back John Ruskin's ancestry for many generations, yet we can discover the source from which he largely inherited his greatness. His paternal grandfather—who if not a Scotchman, resided in Scotland—through some unfortunate speculations ruined the worldly prospects of his family. This crisis roused the energies of the son who was to become the father of the subject of this sketch. When quite a lad he left Perth, came up to London, and for nine years drudged in a merchant's office without a single holiday. He then commenced business on his own account, his first work being to pay off his father's debts. He became partner in a firm of vintners which soon attained to considerable note, and after a long and honourable career bequeathed a fortune of a hundred and fifty-seven thousand pounds.

The father of John Ruskin, however, was no mere city drudge. He was a man of considerable culture, and spent much of his spare time in making pen and ink sketches, and in studying the productions of the great masters in art. Many men of note gathered round his table, and the leading London merchants were among his associates. It is often asked, with a sneer, what John Ruskin knows of commercial life? Suffice it to say, that from earliest years he was privileged to hear in his own home the conversation of the leading tradesmen of the metropolis.

Speaking of his father, and of one of his father's friends—a Mr. Harrison—he says:—"They were both flawless types of the true London citizen of olden days: incorruptible, proud with sacred and humble pride, happy in their function and position; putting daily their total energy into the detail of their business duties, and finding daily a refined

and perfect pleasure in the hearth-side poetry of domestic life. Both of them in their hearts as romantic as girls; both of them as inflexible as soldier recruits on any matter of probity and honour, in business or out of it; both of them utterly hating radical newspapers, and devoted to the House of Lords; my father only, it seemed to me, slightly failing in his loyalty to the Worshipful the Mayor and Corporation of London."

John Ruskin's maternal grandfather was a seafaring man, taking frequent and long voyages from Yarmouth. He combined the fondness of a father with the sternness of a disciplinarian; and was unrelenting in punishment if his commands were disobeyed. On one occasion, the girl who was to be the mother of John Ruskin told her seafaring parent a lie, and forthwith he sent his servant for a bundle of new broom twigs wherewith to whip her. The impression produced by this correction may be best given in her own words,—"They did not hurt me so much as ONE would have done, but I THOUGHT a good deal of it." He died while his children were young; and John Ruskin's mother was sent with her sisters to school at Croydon, where she completed her education, and afterwards went into Scotland to take charge of the house of her reckless old uncle, the father of the industrious London clerk before named. Whether the cousins met often, we cannot say; it is enough that they knew one another and loved one another; the result being, as their son says, "my father ended by marrying his exemplary Croydon cousin."

The mother of John Ruskin was, in every sense, a remarkable woman. Her son, in summing up her character, speaks of her as having "great power with not a little pride;" and adds, that she was "entirely conscientious, and a consummate housekeeper." She possessed great powers

of endurance, and would drive for many hours without leaning back in the carriage for rest. Her taste in literature was choice, as will be seen in her selection of books for the education of her child.

John Ruskin was an only child, and born in London on the 8th of February, 1819. As a boy he was closely observant, his recollections of life dating from his fourth year. Of these recollections we have some charming fragments in the pages of "Fors Clavigera." They give us glimpses of a little boy reverently watching his father at work on sketches in india ink; of a loving mother; of a fond aunt with Evangelical tendencies, enforcing cold mutton dinners on Sunday because it was the day of rest; of pleasant holidays at Croydon spent in romps upon the Duppas Hill, or the heather at Addington; with strange adventures in his uncle's bakehouse, and hours of childish musing round "the spring of crystal water at the back door." When he was three years and a half old he stood for his portrait, and being asked by the artist, Northcote, what he would like for the back-ground of the painting replied, "blue hills." At the age of five he was a voracious reader, sending regularly to the circulating library for his favourite books.

The home-rule of his mother was well-nigh puritanic in severity; his toys were few, and his sources of amusement limited. He says:—"For toys, I had a bunch of keys to play with, as long as I was capable of pleasure in what glittered and jingled; as I grew older I had a cart, and a ball; and when I was five or six years old, two boxes of well-cut wooden bricks. With these modest, but I still think, entirely sufficient possessions, and being always summarily whipped if I cried, did not do as I was bid, or tumbled on the stairs, I soon attained serene and secure methods of life and motion, and could pass my days contentedly in tracing the

squares and comparing the colours of my carpet; examining the knots in the wood of the floor, or counting the bricks in the opposite houses; with rapturous intervals of excitement during the filling of the water-cart, through its leathern pipe, from the dripping iron post at the pavement edge; or the still more admirable proceedings of the turncock, when he turned and turned until a fountain sprang up in the middle of the street. But the carpet, and what patterns I could find in bed-covers, dresses, or wall-papers to be examined, were my chief resources."

In the further development of John Ruskin's character we may trace three great formative influences,—the influence of his parents, the influence of nature and art, and the influence of literature. Apart from these, it must be remembered, the child's mind was one of rare order, ever receiving with meekness the engrafted word. On many children the system of education to which he was subjected would have been thrown away, but his nature was responsive to the influences brought to bear upon it.

His mother carefully allotted his hours of work, discriminately selected his subjects for study, and with unwavering persistence enforced upon her child the scheme she had planned. On one occasion she held her self-willed pupil for three weeks at the couplet,—

> "Shall any following spring revive
> The ashes of his urn?"

before she succeeded in getting him to rightly accent the word "of," and, as he says, "if it had taken her three years instead of three weeks, she would have held out, having once undertaken to do it." Strange to say, John Ruskin did not learn to read by syllables. He would get an entire sentence off by heart, and then point to every word as he repeated it, learning whole words at a time.

His acquaintance with art began early. His father, as we have seen, had a passionate and discriminating taste for pictures, and did all in his power to cultivate the same in his son. Whenever, in their journeyings, they came near any gentleman's house famed for its art collection, they would bait the horses and find time to inspect its treasures. In speaking of his father's tastes, he says, "My father had a quite infallible natural judgment in painting, and though it had never been cultivated so as to enable him to understand the Italian schools, his sense of the power of the northern masters was as true and passionate as that of the most accomplished artist. He never, when I was old enough to care for what he himself delighted in, allowed me to look at a bad picture."

John Ruskin's love of nature was largely developed by his early travels. His father, the senior partner in the house of Ruskin, Telford, and Domecq, travelled for the firm during the summer months of the year. In those days the rush and competition of life were not such as to necessitate the overwrought commercial habits common in our own time. In a post-chaise, with a seat specially fitted up for the boy John, and from which he had good view of all surrounding objects, this wine merchant of the olden type slowly drove to take his orders and settle his accounts. Whenever some lovely landscape opened out before him he would stop to take full measure of the scene, and thitherward direct the child's attention. Now and again, alighting from the chaise, they would stroll along some bye-path or hedge-row, looking into the beauty of a flower, and anon gazing in rapture at some lovely nook where nature had lavished her richest gifts of fern and foliage. Thus, passing through much of the choicest English scenery, the boy's soul expanded as he beheld with admiration and awe the handiwork of God. His own words are as follows:—

"I possess the gift of taking pleasure in landscape in a greater degree than most men. . . . The first thing I remember as an event in life, was being taken by my nurse to the brow of "Friar's Crag," on Derwentwater. The intense joy, mingled with awe, that I had in looking through the mossy roots over the crag into the dark lake, has associated itself more or less with all twining roots of trees ever since. Two other things I remember, as, in a sort, beginnings of life;—crossing Shap-fells (being let out of the chaise to run up the hill); and going through Glen Farg, near Kinross, on a winter's morning when the rocks were hung with icicles; these being culminating points in an early life of more travelling than is usually indulged in to a child. In such journeyings, whenever they brought me near hills, and in all mountain ground and scenery, I had a pleasure, as early as I can remember, and continuing until I was eighteen or twenty, infinitely greater than any which has been since possible to me in anything, comparable for intensity only to the joy of a lover, in being near a noble and kind mistress, but no more explicable or definable than love itself."

The books chosen for him by his mother, and which he regularly read aloud in her presence, were Pope's translation of "Homer," and the novels of Sir Walter Scott; these were for week-day instruction; for the Sabbath were reserved "Robinson Crusoe" and "Pilgrim's Progress." In addition he daily read aloud, and daily committed to memory portions of the Bible. He owes much to this instruction in the word of God, received at his mother's knee, and never wearies of referring to it with expressions of deepest gratitude. He says:—"My mother forced me by steady, patient, daily toil, to learn long chapters of the Bible by heart, as well as to read it every syllable through, aloud, hard names and all, from Genesis to the Apocalypse, about once every year; and

to that discipline,—patient, accurate, and resolute, I owe, not only a knowledge of the book I find occasionally serviceable, but much of my general power of taking pains, and the best part of my taste in literature. From Walter Scott I might easily, as I grew older, have fallen to other people's novels, and Pope might have led me to take Johnson's English or Gibbon's, as types of language, but once knowing the xxxii. of Deuteronomy, cxix. Psalm, xiii. of 1st Corinthians, the Sermon on the Mount, and most of the Apocalypse, every syllable by heart, and having always a way of thinking with myself what words meant, it was not possible for me, even in the foolishest time of youth, to write entirely superficial or formal English, and the affectation of trying to write like Hooker or George Herbert was the most innocent I could have fallen into."

Or, again, what can be more touching than the following reference to the same subject in another part of his writings: —"I opened my oldest Bible just now. . . . yellow, now, with age, and flexible, but not unclean, with much use, except that the lower corners of the pages at the viii. ch. of 1st Book of Kings and the xxxii. ch. of Deuteronomy are worn somewhat thin and dark, the learning of these two chapters having caused me much pains. My mother's list of chapters with which, learned every syllable accurately, she established my soul in life, has just fallen out of it, as follows:—'Exodus xv. and xx.; II Samuel i. ch., from 17 v. to end; I Kings viii.; Psalms xxiii., xxxii., xc., xci., ciii., cxii., cxix., cxxxix.; Proverbs ii., iii., viii., xii.; Isaiah lviii.; Matthew v., vi., vii.; Acts xxvi.; I Corinthians xiii., xv.; James iv.; Revelation v., vi.' And truly, though I have picked up the elements of a little further knowledge . . . . in mathematics, meteorology, and the like, in after-life, and owe not a little to the teaching of many people, this maternal

installation of my mind in that property of chapters, I count very confidently the most precious, and, on the whole, the one essential part of all my education. For the chapters became, indeed, strictly conclusive and protective to me in all modes of thought, and the body of divinity they contain, acceptable through all fear or doubt: nor through any fear or doubt or fault have I ever lost my loyalty to them, nor betrayed the first command in the one I was made to repeat oftenest,—"Let not mercy and truth forsake thee."

These are noble words, and such testimony, from one of the foremost men in thought and literature, is indeed cheering to those who still retain reverence for the "written word." The best defenders of the Bible are men who, like John Ruskin, have proved its value from life-long embodiment of its principles, and compared with their defence, the special pleadings of doctrinaires and apologists go for little. That is a baseless faith which relies solely upon external pleas. Those who know the Bible best, believe most in its authority. To such, and to such alone, the Book becomes what it became to John Ruskin,—"conclusive and protective"; and when once its conclusiveness and protectiveness are realized, it matters little who attacks it, inasmuch as it has given irrefragable proof that its commandments are exceeding broad, and that in the keeping of them there is life.

From the tuition of his mother,—a tuition for which he acknowledges an unspeakable indebtedness, and describes as "accurate, patient, and resolute,"—he passed into the school-room of the Rev. Thomas Dale. It was upon his entrance into this school that he met with the first of the world's rebuffs; and so touchingly has he described it, that it would be foolish to recount it in other words.

"On the first day when I went to take my seat in Mr. Dale's school-room, I carried my old grammar to him, in a modest pride, expecting some encouragement and honour for the accuracy with which I could repeat, on demand, some hundred and sixty printed pages of it. But Mr. Dale threw it back to me with a fierce bang upon his desk, saying (with accent and look of seven-times-heated scorn),—"That's a SCOTCH thing." Now, my father being Scotch, and an Edinburgh High School boy, and my mother having laboured in that book with me since I could read, and all my happiest holiday time having been spent on the North Inch of Perth, these four words, with the action accompanying them, contained so much insult, pain, and loosening of my respect for my parents, love of my father's country, and honour for its worthies, as it was possible to compress into four syllables, and an ill-mannered gesture. . . . To make a boy despise his mother's care, is the straightest way also to make him despise his Redeemer's voice; and to make him scorn his father and his father's house, the straightest way to make him despise his God."

This was John Ruskin's first experience of the world's scorn, and it left its scar upon his youthful heart. Alas! since then he has often proved the world yields more of scorn than sympathy, and that trustful and tender natures are oftenest compelled to smart beneath its idle and rashly spoken words.

From this school he went to Christ Church, Oxford, and found himself transferred to the centre of a great life. Those were the times of "feast of reason and flow of soul"; and the set with whom John Ruskin associated gave unmistakable and literal adhesion to this order of the day. It was then customary to feast and fuddle at the college suppers until many of the undergraduates were carried out in a

state of helpless intoxication. To one of ascetical temperament and refined disposition these orgies were most unenjoyable. Describing one such, he says:—"Thirty years ago, I, a most inexperienced freshman, went to my first college supper. At the head of the table sat a nobleman of high promise and of admirable powers, since dead of palsy. There, also, we had in the midst of us, not buckets, indeed, but bowls as large as buckets; there, also, we helped ourselves with ladles. There (for this beginning of college life was compulsory) I choosing ladlefuls of punch instead of claret, because I was then able, unperceived, to pour them into my waistcoat instead of down my throat, stood it out to the end, and helped to carry four of my fellow students, one of them the son of the head of a college, head foremost, down stairs and home."

One of his co-temporaries at Oxford was the late Frederick William Robertson, of Brighton: a man who attained a height in the realm of pulpit eloquence equal to that attained by Ruskin in the realm of art criticism. While fellow students they crossed swords in a memorable debate on the "Tendency of the Intellectual and Moral Teachings of the Stage." Ruskin took the affirmative, Robertson the negative position. Ruskin incidentally gave a clever and well-remembered sketch of the devil, much to the discomfiture of his opponent, and to the amusement of the class; proving himself, at that early age, a master of sarcasm and an accomplished wit.

While at Oxford he was successful in competition for the Newdigate Prize Poem. It was entitled "Salsette and Elephanta," and describes the dawn of Christianity in Hindustan. This poem is pervaded by a deeply religious tone, at times almost evangelical; and the metre reminds one of that adopted at times by Pope. It was recited in

the Theatre, Oxford, on June 12th, 1839, and closes with the following description of the universal spread of Christianity:—

> "Yes—he shall fall, though once his throne was set
> Where the high heaven and crested mountains met;
> Though distant shone with many an azure gem
> The glacier glory of his diadem;
> Though sheets of sulphurous cloud and wreathed storm
> Cast veil of terror round his shadowy form.
> All, all are vain! It comes, the hallowed day,
> Whose dawn shall rend that robe of fear away;
> Then shall the torturing spells that midnight knew
> Far in the cloven dells of Mount Meru,
> Then shall the moan of frenzied hymns, that sighed
> Down the dark vale where Gunga's waters glide,
> Then shall the idol chariots' thunder cease
> Before the steps of them that publish peace.
> Already are they heard,—how fair, how fleet!
> Along the mountains flash their bounding feet!
> Disease and death before their presence fly;
> Truth calls, and gladdened India hears the cry,
> Deserts the darkened path her fathers trod,
> And seeks redemption from the Incarnate God."

From college he passed into the great battle-plain of life, finding himself at four-and-twenty in the thickest of the fray. Roused by what he deemed the unfair and cruel strictures of the press upon the works of Turner, he addressed himself, not so much to defend that great painter's reputation, as to uphold the principles of truth and beauty embodied in his art. To this end he issued the first volume of "Modern Painters," in 1844. The second volume followed after an interval of two years. Inasmuch as the history of this great work, along with his other chief productions, will be dealt with in a succeeding chapter, it is enough to note here that between the years 1844 and 1860 there appeared, from his

pen, five volumes of "Modern Painters," the three volumes of "Stones of Venice," and a volume entitled "The Seven Lamps of Architecture." Since 1860, his writings have covered a wider range of subject, appearing from time to time in single volume form, each complete in itself. Of these the most noted is "Unto this Last," and the most popular "Sesame and Lilies."

John Ruskin has spent many years in continental travel. The quaint streets of mediæval cities, the façades of Venice, the art galleries of Italy, the Alps of Switzerland, and the Campagnas of the South, have, in turn, received his closest and most appreciative survey. Concerning them all he has written powerfully and pleasingly; and if any would read of their past histories, and know something of their wealth of loveliness, he can turn to few sources more instructive than those of his writings which cover the period of the above travels.

His domestic life has been characterized by its immobility. With the exception of a year or two of childhood spent in Brunswick Square, he resided for upwards of half a century on the Herne Hill and Denmark Hill estates. Here, as elsewhere, he has faithfully followed the teachings laid down in his books. In the "Lamp of Memory," when writing on this subject, he says:—"I cannot but think it an evil sign of a people when their houses are built to last for one generation only. There is a sanctity in a good man's house which cannot be renewed in every tenement that rises on its ruins: and I believe that good men would generally feel this; and that having spent their lives happily and honourably, they would be grieved, at the close of them, to think that the place of their earthly abode, which had seen, and seemed almost to sympathize in, all their honour, their gladness, or their suffering,—that this,

with all the record it bare of them, and all of material things that they had loved and ruled over, and set the stamp of themselves upon—was to be swept away, as soon as there was room made for them in the grave; that no respect was to be shewn to it, no good to be drawn from it by their children; that though there was a monument in the church, there was no warm monument in the hearth and house to them; that all they had ever treasured was despised, and the places that had sheltered and comforted them were dragged down to the dust. I say that a good man would fear this; and that, far more, a good son, a noble descendant, would fear doing it to his father's house."

John Ruskin has fulfilled the letter and the spirit of this teaching. The house at Herne Hill still stands untouched; and though the encroachments of a so-called modern civilization have destroyed its once rural surroundings, its inner radiancy of sacred memories remains undimmed. Whenever the master journeys to town, he turns to its old roof-tree for shelter, the nursery of his childhood being the room wherein he seeks repose. Speaking of this, his early home, and its once pleasant environments, he says:—
"In my young days Croxsted Lane was a green bye-road . . . . . little else than a narrow strip of untilled field, separated by blackberry hedges from the better cared-for meadows on each side of it. There my mother and I used to gather the first buds of the hawthorn; and there, in after years, I used to walk in the summer shadows, as in a place wilder and sweeter than our garden, to think over any passage I wanted to make better than usual in "Modern Painters."

In 1875 he bought the Brantwood estate for the sum of £1,500, and spent £4,000 more in alterations, additions, and other improvements, before it was fit for habita-

tion. The house stands at the foot of a thickly-wooded slope, and fronts the waters of Coniston. There is nothing æsthetic or pretentious either in the structure or its furnishings, yet within its walls is untold wealth. There hang many of the Turner drawings, and not a few choice productions from the brushes of the old masters; there, too, are to be found cabinets filled with costly crystals and other precious stones, with many a relic of the past in shape of missals, black letter M. S. S. and mediæval curiosities gathered from the old cities of Europe; and there are stored those rows of "Kings' treasures," the wealth of which is so well known to their owner, and concerning which he has written with such attractiveness and profit. At the angle of one of the rooms, known as the "turret chamber," is constructed a kind of oriel window, from which the master can see the whole stretch of surrounding country, and the rising and the setting of the sun. Describing dawn from this outlook, he says:—"Morning breaks as I write, along those Coniston Fells, and the level mists, motionless and grey beneath the rose of the moorlands, veil the lower woods, and the sleeping village, and the long lawn by the lake shore."

From 1870 to 1879 John Ruskin was "Slade Professor of Art" at the University of Oxford.* Here he soon became the centre of so powerful an influence, that he purposely sought retirement in order to limit the power he was unintentionally wielding over the undergraduates; and he was so popular as a lecturer that, in order to accommodate his audience, the Sheldonian Theatre was called into use for his spoken addresses. It was during his term of professorship that he led his students, by way of recreation, to manly and useful toil. "Will none of you," he said, "of your own

* Mr. Ruskin has resumed the professorship at Oxford this year.

strength and your leisure do anything for the poor—drain a single cottage, repair a single village bye-way,—and you yourselves will be more strong, and your hearts more light, than had your leisure been spent in costly games, or more hurtful amusements." To this noble appeal there was a generous response, and for some time the work was continued with a fair share of success; but eventually, owing to the laughter of the onlookers, and the jeers of the peasantry, the scheme was abandoned.

In politics, John Ruskin calls himself a Conservative, using the term in its original rather than in its accepted sense. He follows principles, not parties; and would select the ablest men for representatives and rulers, independent of all colour or clique. He holds that purity of motive and justness of enactment are the only permanent foundations of government, and concludes that whenever a man, or a body of men, gives proof of inability in legislation, they forfeit all claim to rule, no matter whatever their wealth or rank. The following are his words:—"What is to become of the House of Lords? The answer to such a question depends first upon their being able to answer another question—What is the use of them? For some time back, I think the theory of the nation has been, that they are useful as impediments to business, so as to give time for second thoughts. But the nation is getting impatient of impediments to business, and certainly, sooner or later, will think it needless to maintain these expensive obstacles to its humours. And I have not heard, either in public, or from themselves, a clear expression of their own conception of their uses. So it seems thus to become needful for all men to tell them, as our one quite-clear-sighted teacher, Carlyle, has been telling us for many a year, that the use of the Lords of a country is to *govern* the country. If they answer that use the people

will rejoice in keeping them; if not, that will become of them which must of all things found to have lost their serviceableness."

John Ruskin is impatient of all political tinkering: he hates half-measures, and scorns methods of reformation which begin with the branches and work downward, instead of working from the root upward. He would ask:—Why fine and imprison men for getting drunk, when you create the appetite by the unhealthiness of the toil in which you engage them, and feed the appetite by licensing houses for the sale of adulterated drink? Why play at reducing rents while the peasantry are starving, and you hold back from them their rightful ownership of the land? Why seek to quieten the mass by the bestowment of the franchise, when you care not to bestir yourselves in their social and religious education, and refuse to look at the real root of their dissatisfaction and unrest? Let the reader bear this in mind, and then he will be better able to understand those torrents of scorn and invective which, from time to time, John Ruskin has brought down upon our political leaders, and, which for the time being, have brought him into such disrepute with the parties thus attacked through their leaders. Hence, while calling himself a Conservative, he is essentially a Radical,—nay, he owns to having communistic tendencies of no uncertain colour.

Viewed from a religious stand-point, we may speak of him as a broad churchman. Though a member of the Church of England from his youth up, he is altogether free from that sectarian pride which counts all other faiths false, and all other forms of worship vain. True, he was trained in the straitest of evangelical schools, and the effects of this training is discoverable in much of his earlier writing; but in his later works we see the breadth and fullness of *truth*

rather than the sharp and definite lines of *creed.* He has strikingly related his conversion,—or, as he terms it, his un-conversion—from the narrower to the broader views of religious truth. During one of his continental tours he chanced to enter a Waldensian Church, and while therein heard a small man in its pulpit cut off from hope, and denounce as dishonest, all who dared to differ in faith or form of worship from himself, and from his church. Logically applying this teaching, and discovering thereby that if it were true, only a handful of the race could be right, and hence participators of salvation, he tells us, he came out an *un*-converted man; and from that time his exclusive protestantism and narrow evangelical faith became things of the past.

But even in these days of narrow evangelicalism, he does not seem to have been fettered by any one special form of service. He tells us that he sat with much edification for a year or two under the ministry of Mr. Spurgeon; and while in Edinburgh he was an attentive listener to the glowing periods of Dr. Guthrie. Indeed, few men have attended the house of God more regularly than he. He says:—"I am now sixty years old, and for forty-five of them was in church at least once on the Sunday,—say once a month also in the afternoons . . . . When I am abroad, I am often in half-a-dozen churches in the course of a single day, and never lose a chance of listening to anything that is going on. Add the conversation pursued, not unearnestly, with every sort of reverend person I can get to talk to me—from the Bishop of Strasbourg, with whom I was studying ecstatic paintings in the year 1850—down to the simplest travelling tinker inclined gospelwards, whom I perceive to be sincere."

He is warm in his attachment to all animals and birds. He has been seen to stop in Oxford streets to caress and admire

the dogs that chanced to cross his path; and those who have read "Fors Clavigera," and "Love's Meinie," know how passionately he has pleaded for the protection of the little birds that soar and sing in our English gloom.

His generosity has been a life-long characteristic. His liberality at times appears to have approached prodigality,—gifts flowing forth in fifties, hundreds, and thousands of pounds at a time. On one occasion, when a young woman who had received brutal treatment from the man to whom she was betrothed, was imprisoned because of her inability to meet the recognisances of £40 enforced by the law owing to her refusal to prosecute, Mr. Ruskin at once forwarded the sum required for her release. He has established and endowed museums, dwelling houses for the poor, and given much of his money and treasures to the St. George's and Oxford Schools of Art. Discovering, on his father's death, that he was sole inheritor of his immense fortune, he at once distributed £7,000 among the relatives he deemed his father to have overlooked. Indeed, out of a fortune of £157,000 there remains but some £12,000, the rest having been distributed after the fashion named above. At this generosity the world laughs, deeming it foolishly and madly expended money; whereas if he had spent it in training horses rather than in training men, it would have been set down as a mark of his sanity, and he would have been enshrined as a saint of the turf. But John Ruskin has ever remembered his stewardship, and fears not the day when his Lord shall claim from him the rendering of his accounts.

Like all great reformers and prophets, his path has been blocked and his steps dogged by the blindness and selfishness of his fellows. His noble utterances are burlesqued, and his plans for the improvement of his nation denounced as the spawn of an imbecile mind; his reputation is maligned,

and his charitable deeds counted as prodigality; ministers of religion fight shy of him the powerfullest preacher and teacher of his day, and merchants make a mock at him because he tells them that the multiplication of money is *not* the great end of life; society, rooted in selfishness, deems him insane, inasmuch as he has given his life and wealth for others. In one of his grand passages of defence, when the whole nation and its press were clamouring against him, he says:—"Because I have passed my life in alms giving, not in fortune hunting; because I have laboured always for the honour of others, not of my own, and have chosen rather to make men look to Turner and Luini, than to form or exhibit the skill of my own hand; because I have lowered my rents, and assured the comfortable lives of my poor tenants, instead of taking from them all I could force for the roofs they needed; because I love a wood walk better than a London street; and would rather watch a seagull fly than shoot it, and rather hear a thrush sing than eat it; finally, because I never disobeyed my mother, because I have honoured all women with solemn worship, and have been kind even to the unthankful and the evil; therefore the hacks of English art and literature wag their heads at me, and the poor wretch who pawns the dirty linen of his soul daily for a bottle of sour wine and a cigar, talks of the effeminate sentimentality of Ruskin."

It is no easy matter to convey, especially in a paragraph, an intelligible and accurate outline of the intellectual and moral disposition of the man whose parentage, childhood, and manhood we have so hastily surveyed. His crowning mental gift is power of analysis; not the cold, bloodless analysis of the scientist of modern days, for linked to his analytical power is the wealth of a fervid imagination and a humble and reverent mind. Hence

his penetrative glance detects the soul of things as well as their substance; and he remembers that when he sees most clearly, he sees but through a glass darkly. He is a man of mighty heart; there beat within him passionate pulses ever keeping time to beauty in the world of matter, and to truth and righteousness in the world of man. When face to face with nature, fields and rivers, mountains and clouds start wondrous music from his soul; when face to face with man, craft and greed, falseness and death call forth the "fierce lightning bolts" as of a "divine rage." In him is the spirit of chivalry: fearless when fronting or exposing wrong, he is tender as a child to all in weakness, sympathetic as a woman to all in pain.

Of John Ruskin's personal appearance little need be said. The photographers and engravers have made him so well known, that even the busy crowds in our city streets are familiar with his face. I know of no faithfuller verbal portrait than that given by Mr. Smart in his inaugural address, delivered before the Ruskin Society of Glasgow:—"That spare, stooping figure, the rough-hewn kindly face, with its mobile, sensitive mouth, and clear deep eyes, so sweet and honest in repose, so keen and earnest and eloquent in debate."

CHAPTER II.

Early Literary and Artistic Efforts.

MAN is not a mariner left to sink or swim upon a stormy sea of circumstance, as fate or chance may determine. His life is rather the fulfilment of an appointed course; and though he may not know its whence and whither, there is, nevertheless, precious freight for his bark, a highway on the main for his voyaging, and a load-star that brings him to his desired haven. Life is a Divine movement. He who so wonderfully shaped, and so mysteriously started man, neither shaped nor started him in vain. God does not spend His strength for naught; and we gather proofs of infinite purpose in man's being, from the proofs of infinite wisdom seen in his substance. His power of endless growth, and his wealth of special endowment bespeak a Divinity seeking to shape and use, and testify that to some end was he born, and for some cause came he into the world.

Unfortunately, for the realisation of this truth, few men believe it, and those who do too often hesitate to apply it. The great men of this age are pessimistic, and the masses materialistic—the one without hope, the other without God. While the few, who have faith in Divine calls, get so confused amid the babbling voices around that the little day of life is spent ere they decide as to which voice comes from earth, and which from heaven.

It would be out of place to deal here with the godlessness of the age; nevertheless, a few words to those who have faith in Divine calls may not be out of place at the com-

mencement of a chapter seeking to recount the call of John Ruskin to the labour field of life.

He tells us in his "Stones of Venice" that God makes every man fit for his work; in other words, that no man is without a divinely appointed task, and divinely bestowed strength adequate for its fulfilment. His unwavering faith in this principle is the source of much of his inspiration, and the very fibre of his long continued efforts. "But," you say, "how is man to know for what work God has fitted him? To know this, which is the great end of life, two things are needful: a humble and patient disposition on the part of the inquirer, and the constant test of his powers by work.

First, then, he who seeks his life's true calling must seek it in the spirit of humility and patience;—humility, enabling him to seek it in his own station, and that in the doing of little things rather than of great; and patience to wait for the tide of fortune, once or oftener, rising in the lives of all.

Along with such humble and patient disposition there must be the test of individual power by work. Practice, and not speculation, is the revealing medium of power, its Divinely sanctioned channel. It is through continued effort and repeated failure that man eventually discovers what he is, and what he ought to do; through this, alone, he attains the station in which he is usefullest and happiest, and secures the post and employment he was created to fulfil. The most distressful period in life—and likewise the most unsatisfactory while it lasts—is the period in which a man feels the stirrings of his powers, yet sees no area for their play; and the most miserable of men are those who, having missed their mission, find themselves on shipboard, bound for Tarshish, when their voice is needed in the

streets of Nineveh. They are, indeed, unfortunate who thus find themselves at a work unsuited to their powers, and in circumstances unfitted to their calling. God never meant that it should be so. He who calls, fits; and He who fits, calls. Blessed is the man who knoweth his Master's will, and doeth it.

Thus, the beginnings of life are periods in which every moment trembles with destinies; and the records of such periods, especially when those of the men who have faithfully and manfully fulfilled their course, are fraught with interest and profit. The aspirations of the youthful soul, the tentative work of early years, the wishes of parents, the advice of friends, the slow emergement from uncertainty into the one definite, infinite line of life—all these movements, and their consequences can never be studied in vain.

In John Ruskin's career we see the frustration of the passionate wishes of his parents, and the accomplishment of a work entirely antagonistic to the one suggested by his own early desires. His father and mother dedicated him to, and trained him for, the office of priest in the Established Church of England, and, to the last, mourned their unfulfilled desires. But God had willed it otherwise. He called their son from the college halls of Oxford to prophesy in the temple of nature, and clothing him in holy insignia, ordained him to minister at the altars of the everlasting hills, and proclaim the good tidings of beauty and truth. If John Ruskin had consulted his merely selfish wishes he would have given himself to artistic pursuits, spending his time in the galleries of Italy, and in occasional exhibition at the academy; anon, frittering away his spare moments in the production of pretty poems. But God qualified him for other work, and apprehended him for its

accomplishment. Before, however, we look at the decisive step for ever fixing his future, it will be well to glance at some of those earlier movements and achievements which led him to forsake his parents' wish, and to follow faithfully the Divine call.

We have seen how, from childhood, John Ruskin possessed the gift of taking delight in natural scenery; he likewise, from childhood, possessed the power of word-arrangement, both as to rhythm and accuracy of meaning. This unquestionable hint as to the direction in which the child's powers resided, was seized upon by his parents. They closely watched and carefully developed these first movements of the youthful mind, and, when hardly nine years of age, he rewarded them for their labour by composing the following lines descriptive of a frosty day in Glen Farg, just north of Loch Leven :—

> "Papa, how pretty those icicles are,
> That are seen so near, that are seen so far;
> Those dropping waters that come from the rocks,
> And many a hole, like the haunt of a fox.
> That silvery stream that runs babbling along,
> Making a murmuring, dancing song.
> Those trees that stand waving upon the rock's side,
> And men, that like spectres, among them glide.
> And waterfalls that are heard from far,
> And come in sight when very near.
> And the water-wheel that turns slowly round,
> Grinding the corn that requires to be ground.
> And mountains at a distance seen,
> And rivers winding through the plain.
> And quarries with their craggy stones,
> And the wind among them moans."

In this little poem we discover an accurate reading of nature's forms and moods; a delicate ear for the sound of

brook and waterfall; a marvellous sequence in the arrangement of objects,—icicles, dropping water, silvery streams, trees, rocks, quarries; and a weird-tone withal, the men, spectre-like in the distance, and the wind moaning in its winter haunts. All this is worthy of note in the poem of a child nine years old, and in it we may find the promise of his future achievements.

Much of his time during his earlier years was spent in wooing the muses. He says: "A certain capacity for rhythmic cadence (visible enough in all my later writings), and the cheerfulness of a most protracted, but not foolishly indulged childhood, made me early a rhymester, and a shelf on the little cabinet beside which I am now writing is loaded with poetic effusions, which were the delight of my father and mother."

At the age of fifteen he was a contributor to a small periodical entitled, "Friendship's Offering." These contributions took the form of verse, and though many bear the impress of the inexperienced hand, yet some are exceedingly fine, and give unmistakable signs of promise. They are full of descriptive passages, and fairly glow with colour. In many of them we discover the writer's fondness for the sea, as for example:—

> "the breath-like pause and swell
> Of waters following in eternal fall,
> In azure waves, that just betray
> The music quivering in their spray,
> Beneath its seven-fold arch of day;
> High in pale precipices hung
> The lifeless rocks of rigid marble rung,
> Waving the cedar crests along their brows sublime,
> Swift ocean heard beneath, and flung
> His tranced and trembling waves in measured time,
> Along his golden sands with faintly falling chime."

Or again, take the following description of a wreck:—

"Its masts of might, its sails so free,
Had borne the scatheless keel
Through many a day of darkened sea,
And many a storm of steel;
When all the winds were calm, it met
(With home returning prore)
With the lull
Of the waves
On a low lee shore."

Some of his river sketches are of equal beauty; take these few lines from the poem entitled, "The Broken Chain":—

"Along the Loire white sails are flashing,
Through stars of spray their dark oars dashing;
The rocks are reddening one by one,
The purple sand banks flushed with sun,
And crowned with fire on crags and keep,
Ambois! above thy lifted steep,
Far lightning o'er the subject vale,
Blaze thy broad range of ramparts pale!"

Now and again he gives us in these poems a powerful sketch of mountain scenery as in the one entitled, "The Hills of Carrara":—

"Far in the depth of voiceless skies,
Where calm and cold the stars are strewed,
The peaks of pale Carrara rise,
Nor sound of storm, nor whirlwind rude,
Can break their chill of marble solitude;
The crimson lightnings round their crest,
May hold their fiery feud—
They hear not, nor reply; their chasmèd rest,
No floweret decks, nor herbage green, nor breath
Of moving thing can change their atmosphere of death."

But, perhaps, the most beautiful of these early poetic productions is the one entitled

The Old Water Wheel.

"It lies beside the river; where the marge
Is dark with many a black and oarless barge;
And yeasty filth, and leafage wild and rank,
Stagnate and batten by the crumbling bank.

Once, slow revolving by the industrious mill,
It murmured,—only on the Sabbath still;
And evening winds its pulse-like beating bore,
Down the soft vale, and by the winding shore.

Sparkling around its orbéd motion flew,
With quick fresh fall, the drops of dashing dew;
Through noon-tide heat that gentle rain was flung,
And verdant round the summer herbage sprung.

Now dancing light and sounding motion cease,
In these dark hours of cold continual peace;
Through its black bars the unbroken moonlight flows,
And dry winds howl about its long repose.

And mouldering lichens creep, and mosses grey
Cling round its arms in gradual decay,
Amidst the hum of men—which doth not suit
That shadowy circle, motionless, and mute.

So by the sleep of many a human heart,
The crowd of men may bear their busy part,
Where withered, or forgotten, or subdued,
Its noisy passions have left solitude.

Ah! little can they trace the hidden truth!
What waves have moved it in the vale of youth!
And little can its broken chords avow
How once they sounded. All is silent now."

The above poem was written when the author was twenty-one years of age. I have transcribed it from a MS. copy in the possession of a gentleman who was privileged to extract it from a gift copy of John Ruskin's poems, lent to him by Dr. John Brown, author of "Rab and his Friends." The doctor had underlined the second stanza with pencil.

These poems, the production of his childhood and youth, were published, for private circulation, in the form of a small volume entitled, "Poems. J. R. Collected 1850." Though their author has seen fit to suppress them, they will, nevertheless, be of interest to those who study the stages of his growth as revealed in his writings. The precision of language, rhythm of metre, power of description, and love of colour, so manifest in all his later writing, are here already discoverable.

John Ruskin's earliest prose contributions consisted in a series of articles on Geology, written when sixteen years of age, and published in Loudon's Magazine of Natural History. These were followed by a series of essays for the Architectural Magazine, bearing the signature *Kata Phusin.* In an after criticism on these latter he says, "They contain sentences nearly as well put together as any I have done since."

But it was the first volume of "Modern Painters" that determined the future of John Ruskin. In its publication may be seen his initial step in the great field of art controversy. Hitherto he had fenced only, surrounded by friends, receiving from time to time their congratulations at the dexterity of his strokes, but now he has to front the unsheathed steel of deadly foes, and war single handed against the well-nigh unanimous verdict of his age.

It may be well to narrate here the history of the volume in the production of which he received his fire-baptism. Mr. Telford, his father's partner, gave him, when quite a child, a copy of Rogers' "Italy," illustrated by Turner. Child though he was, he intuitively read the beauty and caught the suggestiveness of these Turnerian vignettes. Indeed, so much was he absorbed in them that when, on one occasion, he was introduced by Mr. Pringle to Rogers, he forgot to talk about the poems, taking up the whole

of the interview in giving enthusiastic descriptions and searching criticisms of the engravings with which they were illustrated.

In this early acquaintance with Turner's art we discover the chief formative factor in his after life. Henceforth he spared no pains to acquire a wider knowledge of the great painter's works, and with such wider knowledge came an increased admiration and appreciation of his skill.

When Ruskin attained his majority, Turner would be somewhere between sixty and seventy years of age. He was then, if not at the meridian of his reputation, at the meridian of his power, and entering upon his third, and as Ruskin holds, his greatest period of work. In this advance he had risen high above the vulgar tastes of the nation; consequently, having ceased to please it, its praise changed to scorn. The age praises and pays for that which panders to its tastes: the public prefer to be tickled rather than taught. Now that Turner was reaching his loftiest heights of thought, and manifesting a keener insight into the mysteries around him, pen and voice were alike lifted to proclaim what was deemed a waning power, and assert what seemed imbecility. It should be ever remembered that what is seldom seen is seen by few. Nature has her rarer moods, but how seldom are they noticed or known by man. Turner, in the last period of his power, became alive to these rarer moods, and portrayed them with wondrous faithfulness. Inasmuch as he watched for those sunsets that but once or twice in twenty years throw their wealth of flaming colour over the western sky, and then, with matchless skill, revealed his sight to men; those who knew the setting sun only as oftenest seen, said he was false to nature, and attempting to "gild the gold of God." Inasmuch as his eye caught cloud-forms that are seldom

seen in the life of man, and his mighty imaginative power, ranged them upon the canvas; the men who knew but little of God's handiwork in the heavens, spoke of these skies as faithless and gaudy. Inasmuch, as for hours he was lashed to the mast of the tempest-ridden vessel in order to watch the waves clap their hands together, and hearken unto deep as it called unto deep, and thus catch the spirit of the storm; the miserable criticism of those who had never faced nature in her moods of wildest energy, as they beheld his representation, was "soap suds and white-wash." Sight is proportioned to the power of the eye; feeling to the depth of the soul. Here was a seer—a prophet of nature—telling his countrymen what he knew of the spirit of the universe; and they in turn wagged their heads and mocked.

To one who, from youth, intuitively appreciated the genius of Turner, such criticisms were unbearable. They roused his soul from poetic reverie, and fired it for the fray. He speedily fell to sharpening his weapons, and preparing his plan of attack. He wrote a lengthy letter in Turner's defence, purposing to forward it to one of the leading journals; but, inasmuch as it exceeded all journalistic limits, he threw it into the form of a somewhat bulky pamphlet, which pamphlet continued to increase in matter until it finally shaped itself into the first volume of "Modern Painters."

Thus, at the age of four-and-twenty, John Ruskin challenged the verdict of his age concerning one of its greatest sons, and placed himself in direct antagonism to its standards of taste and estimates of truth. At first, the country gazed in wonderment at the rashness of the attack—a youth defying the voice of a people, contradicting the criticism of its press, and asserting his art dicta in the face

of the established canons of four hundred years. When this surprise somewhat ceased, the whole affair was looked upon as the freak of one who had not cut his wisdom teeth, and it was sought to silence him with ridicule. The critics spoke of his style as excusable in a young curate's sermon during the first year of probation, and likely to win more nosegays and favours than golden opinions. But it was soon found that John Ruskin was equal to the warfare he felt himself called upon to wage; and on the appearance of the second volume of "Modern Painters" his position as an art critic and prose writer was indisputable, and the throne of Turner for ever secure.

Little did Mr. Telford think when he presented a copy of Rogers' "Italy," illustrated by Turner, to the lonely child of Herne Hill, that in such act he was bestowing the key which was to unlock one of the most brilliant minds of its day. Yet it was even so. Thus our greatest systems spring from small beginnings, and the thoughts of youth foretell the philosophies of after years.

John Ruskin, in speaking of this period, says:—"But the joyfullest days for me . . . . were in the triumphal Olympiad of years that followed the publication of the second volume of "Modern Painters," when Turner himself had given me his thanks; to my father and mother his true friendship, and came always for *their* honour to keep my birthday with them; the constant dinner party of the day remaining in its perfect chaplet from 1844 to 1850—Turner, Mr. Thomas Richmond, Mr. George Richmond, Samuel Prout, and Mr. Harrison."

Towards the close of the first volume of "Modern Painters" John Ruskin makes a special appeal to the young artists of England. He asks them to "go to nature in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and

trustingly, having no other thought but how best to penetrate her meaning; rejecting nothing, neglecting nothing, and scorning nothing." A band of youthful and gifted painters responded to this call, chief among whom were Holman Hunt and John Everett Millais. The world met their efforts with a general guffaw, and pelted with mud the work they presented to its eye. The following is an extract from one of its criticisms:—"These young artists have unfortunately become notorious by addicting themselves to an antiquated style, and an affected simplicity in painting. . . . We can extend no toleration to a mere senile imitation of the cramped style, false perspective, and crude colours of remote antiquity. We want not to see what Fuseli termed drapery snapped instead of folded, faces bloated into apoplexy, or extenuated to skeletons; colours borrowed from the jars in a druggist's shop, and expression forced into caricature. . . . That morbid infatuation which sacrifices truth, beauty, and genuine feeling to mere eccentricity, deserves no quarter at the hand of the public."

John Ruskin immediately took upon himself the defence of these young pre-Raphaelites. In a series of letters to the *Times* he points out the truthfulness of detail and the delicacy of finish perceptible in their works; and upholds them as faithful to their mission in drawing what they see, or what they suppose might have been the actual facts of the scene they desire to represent, and pleads on their behalf for fair criticism, inasmuch as they then face a most critical period in their career,—standing at a turning point from which they may either sink into nothingness, or rise to very real greatness. During the year in which these letters appeared he published a pamphlet on pre-Raphaelitism, in which a further development of the defence of this school is instituted.

In all this early literary work he was carefully tutored, and mercilessly criticised by the late Mr. W. H. Harrison, the editor of "Friendship's Offering," and close friend of his father. He speaks of this gentleman as "My first editor," "My old literary master," and tells us how inexorable he was as to stops and grammar. In referring to the help he received from Mr. Harrison's supervision he says:—"Many a sentence in "Modern Painters," which I had thought quite beautiful, turned out after a forenoon's work, had to be turned outside in after all, and cut into the smallest pieces, and sewn up again, because he (Mr. Harrison) had found out that there was not a nominative in it, or a genitive, or a conjunction, or something else indispensable to a sentence's decent existence and position in life. . . Not a book of mine, for good thirty years, but went, every word of it, under his careful eye twice over . . . often also the last revises left to his tender mercies altogether on condition he would not bother me more."

The time John Ruskin has been compelled to give to literature has necessarily limited his efforts in the realm of art. His first masters in drawing and painting were Harding and Copley Fielding, and throughout his life he has given many spare moments to the cultivation of their principles. He has illustrated his own works; and in the Walkley Museum, near Sheffield, many of his sketches may be seen. More than once he has exhibited at the Academy, and to-day he feels no little pleasure in showing to his friends, in a quiet hour, the productions of his brush. But it was as a prophet, not as a painter, that John Ruskin was to be known among his fellows: we have seen in this chapter how he was early called, in the following chapters we shall look at the nature of his mission—the burden of his words.

CHAPTER III.

First Period of Literary Activity.

JOHN RUSKIN is no mere book-maker, but a genuine man of letters—a prophet in the realm of literature, fearlessly and unmistakably speaking forth the inspiration that is in him. The possession of a large private income frees him from the limitations so often imposed by publisher and public; independent of both he utters words impossible to those whose livelihood proceeds from the profits of their literary labours. In all his writings there is the free flow of conscience, mind, and heart. They possess a definite moral aim, and seek to rectify false national judgments, to condemn popular national sins, to restore well-nigh erased inscriptions of truth and beauty, and interpret the falsely judged and much maligned work of some of the world's greatest men. Few of Ruskin's co-temporaries in the realm of letters rival him in number of books issued, and few in range of subject covered: more than forty volumes have already appeared from his pen; while art, architecture, history, science, political economy, and the lighter fields of literature have in turn received his earnest thought and masterly exposition. It may be supposed that in writing so much, and upon so many subjects, he has of necessity written too much, and too superficially. But it is not so: he ever proves himself an authority upon all subjects he takes in hand, and so treats them as to flood them with a fuller light, and clothe them in a more attractive garb.

His literary career is divisible into two main sections—the first dating from 1844 to 1860; the second from 1860,

and continuing with unabated vigour up to the present time. The former embraces his great works on Art and Architecture, to the analysis of which the present chapter is devoted. The latter period, though embracing several series of art lectures delivered at Oxford, is mainly directed to a discussion of the principles of Political Economy and Social Science, an outline of which will be given in the succeeding chapter. The analyses will be the briefest possible,—finger posts set far apart, indicating for those who know little of Ruskin's teachings the track along which he journeys and the wide and varied fields which he explores.

We have already referred to the events associated with, and giving rise to "Modern Painters," and noted the fact that its five volumes cost their author over twenty years of labour. The first volume, which appeared in 1844, deals broadly with the general question proposed for discussion, and is divided into two parts. The first part sets forth a number of general principles, and the nature of ideas conveyable by art—the greatest art being that which conveys to the mind of the spectator, by any means whatsoever, the greatest number of great ideas, and the greatest artist, he, who embodies in the sum of his works, the greatest number of such ideas. The ideas conveyable by art are then enumerated and defined as follows :—Ideas of Power, or the perception or conception of the mental and bodily powers by which the work has been produced, ranging from the mere stroke of the finger to the workings of the most exalted intellect. Ideas of Imitation, or the perception that the thing produced is a resemblance only,—the perfection of such resemblance being that the imitation is never mistaken for the thing imitated. Ideas of Truth, or the perception of faithfulness in a statement of fact by the thing produced,—ideas of truth differing from ideas of imitation inasmuch

as truth treats of emotions, impressions and thoughts, while imitation treats of material, rather than of moral things. Ideas of Beauty, or the perception of beauty either in the thing produced, or in what it suggests or resembles; such beauty being the subject of moral, and not of intellectual perception. And, lastly, ideas of Relation, or those ideas conveyable by art which are the subjects of distinct intellectual action and perception, and worthy the name of thoughts.

The second part of the first volume bears the heading:—"Of Truth," and is devoted to an application of the ideas already considered. The order of application is:—1. The truth of Tone, or the exact relief and relation of objects against and to each other; and the perfect relation of all shades of them to the chief light of the picture, so that the whole of the picture may be felt to be in one climate, under one kind of light, and in one atmosphere. 2. The truth of Colour, or the degree of accuracy in the artist's rendering of the infinite and unapproachable variety of colour in nature. 3. The truth of Chiaroscuro, or the relation of nature's shadows to her bright lights, and the proportion in which she uses her highest lights and deepest shadows;—her lights always being subdued if extensive, and her shadows feeble if broad. 4. The truth of Space, as dependent upon the focus of the eye, and the power of the eye to receive a clear image of objects at a great distance from it. The truth of Skies is next discussed;—first, the open sky, then the clouds in their cirrus, central, and rain cloud regions. After which follow several chapters devoted to the truth of Earth in its general structure, its central mountains, and its inferior mountains; while lastly, the truth of Water is considered in its manifold forms. After thus stating the laws of truth in the natural world Ruskin shews, in a comparison of the works of Turner

with those of other artists, that he is both more closely and more widely true to nature than any of his fellows.

Having thus set forth in the first volume certain obvious and *visible facts*, he proceeds in the second volume to consider the value and meaning of certain *mental impressions.* The subject matter here, as before, falls into two main divisions, dealing respectively with the Theoretic and Imaginative faculties. The Theoretic is distinguished from the practical in science, as that which marks off the geologist from the miner, and in art the architect from the builder; and the mistake of applauding the practical to the disparagement of the theoretical, with the disastrous results consequent thereon, is exposed in a strikingly powerful passage on the Nebuchadnezzar curse, which has become memorable in English literature. The Theoretic faculty is shown to be a moral, not a sensual or intellectual mode of gratification; and its special function the sight and enjoyment of those beautiful qualities seen in the signature of God upon His works. The beauty thus revealed is arranged under the divisions of Typical and Vital beauty; the former the type or resemblance of the Divine attributes, such as Divine incomprehensibility in infinity, Divine comprehensiveness in unity, Divine permanence in repose, Divine justice in symmetry, Divine energy in purity, and Divine Government by law in moderation; while Vital beauty is defined as the appearance of felicitous fulfilment of function in living things, visible in the lower animals and in human creatures when they worthily fulfil their offices.

Section II. discusses the Imaginative faculty in its threefold function of Association, Penetration, and Contemplation. The Associative function is commandant; summoning, rearranging, or removing as it pleases any group of images which the mind may receive from nature: the Penetrative

function is analytic; piercing at a glance to the heart of such group, discovering its truth and loveliness, laying bare its falsity and baseness; while the Contemplative function is regardant—the habit or mode in which the other functions delight to work.

In the third volume Ruskin proceeds to examine the success of artists, and especially of Turner, in the employment of these faculties; endeavouring to discover who among them has conveyed the noblest ideas of beauty, and reached the deepest springs of truth. The first question discussed is the real nature of greatness of style. This is shown to consist of the four following features:—1. Choice of noble subjects, indicating the artist's natural disposition to dwell on the highest thoughts of which humanity is capable. Should however his subject be chosen for him then his *treatment* of the subject is to become the test of his greatness. 2. Love of beauty, such beauty to be ever consistent with truth; not that the facts of ugliness are denied, but the artist does not delight to dwell upon them; his passion going out towards the fairest forms, and insisting upon the beauty that is in them. 3. Sincerity, or the selection of the largest possible amount of truth in the most perfect possible harmony, the great artist choosing the most necessary truths first, and afterwards those most consistent with them. 4. Invention, or the treatment of facts imaginatively; while lower art copies what is set before it, the higher art either imagines its subject, or so treats its subject as to manifest the three phases of imaginative power already explained.

Two chapters are then devoted to false ideals,—religious and profane. The origin of the latter is traced to the falsity of the former, it being shewn that when men sacrificed truth to beauty they abandoned the spiritual, and gave rise to

the profane schools of art. Then follow a series of chapters on the true ideal as seen in the schools of the Purist, the Naturalist, and the Grotesque. Purism is unwillingness on the part of men of tender and holy disposition to contemplate various forms of definite evil necessarily occurring in the world; such unwillingness indicating childishness of mind, and rendering true art impossible, inasmuch as pain and imperfection are eternally bound up with existence. Naturalism, occuping the central and highest branch of idealism, accepts both evil and good, taking straight from nature its plain narration of fact, with this difference between the lower and higher artists, that the higher work from actual sight, or sight of faith, independent of all rules, and ever with instructive truth, while the lower are the slaves of rule. The Grotesque or allegorical springs from the healthful but irrational play of the imagination in times of rest, from the irregular and accidental contemplation of things terrible or evil in general, and from the confusion of the imagination by the presence of truths which it cannot wholly grasp.

The latter part of this third volume is given to an analysis of Classic, Mediæval and Modern Landscape, as seen in the Greek, Italian and English mind. The Greek mind is shewn to be indifferent to the most striking scenes of natural beauty, its attention being turned to the beauty of human form and countenance. The Mediæval mind delights much in garden solitude, and possesses an instinctive dread of mountains, inasmuch as monks retired to them for penance, and hermits for meditation; while the Modern mind revels in liberty and lacks faith in the presence of Deity in nature. We have as a result of these mental conditions, in Classic Landscape, natural surroundings subordinate to human use; in the Mediæval, traces of solitude, piety, terror and superstition;

and in the Modern, cloud, mountain, and undue interest in science.

The fourth volume gives its opening chapters to a study of Turnerian Picturesque, Turnerian Topography, Turnerian Light, and Turnerian Mystery; and after a short study of the Firmament and Dry Land enters into an exhaustive analysis of mountains. First, the material of mountains is arranged in the order of "Compact Crystallines," "Slaty Crystallines," "Slaty Coherents," and "Compact Coherents"; then come the Sculpture of Mountains—those of the Lateral Ranges and the Central Peaks; and, lastly, the Resultant Forms,—Aiguilles, Crests, Precipices, Banks, and Stones; the volume concluding with two impressive chapters on "Mountain Gloom" and "Mountain Glory."

The fifth volume, after treating of the Earth-Veil of trees and flowers, and showing Turner's marvellous truthfulness in the delineation of all their forms and colours, closes with several striking chapters in which are set forth the ruling ideas dwelt upon and expounded by the great artists of all ages; with outlines of their birth, parentage, surroundings and teachers, tracing out in striking manner the effects of heredity and environment upon the work of their hands.

The "Seven Lamps of Architecture" appeared in 1849. This book owes its origin to certain facts discovered, and certain conclusions arrived at in the preparation of the third volume of "Modern Painters." It looks upon Architecture as the revealing medium or lamp through which flames a people's passions; the embodiment of their polity, life, history and religious faith in temple and palace, mart and home. The first Lamp is Sacrifice, or the offering of precious things because they are precious, not because they are useful and necessary. When the spirit of sacrifice selects from two marbles it takes the more costly because it *is* more

costly; when deciding between two kinds of ornamentation it prefers the more elaborate because it *is* more elaborate;—such action being determined by the fact that in taking the more costly marble, and the more elaborate ornamentation, it can present in the same compass more value and thought. Ruskin distinguishes this spirit as unreasoning and enthusiastic, and negatively defines it as the opposite of the prevalent feeling of modern times which desires to produce the largest result at the least cost; he also shews that the arts never flourish until primarily devoted to its service, and when so devoted give proof thereof, first in design, and then in expenditure.

Following the "Lamp of Sacrifice" is the "Lamp of Truth," or the spirit of reality and sincerity characteristic of all noble schools of Architecture. In the examination of this Lamp Ruskin condemns, in no measured terms, all falsity of assertion in architectural construction, whether in nature of materials, quantity of labour, or substitution of effect for veracity; and deems such untruthfulness deserving of the reprobation given to all other forms of moral delinquency. This insincerity is shewn to be significant of the debasement of the arts, of a want of probity, and of a fatal separation between art and other subjects of the human intellect as matters of conscience. Architectural deceits are considered under three heads:—False suggestion as to mode of structure or support; false suggestion as to materials, and the substitution of cast or machine-made ornaments for those manufactured by hand. The downfall of art in Europe is then traced to the substitution of line for mass, and the abandonment of general principles of truth for those of mere expression and effect.

The third and fourth chapters set forth the Lamps of "Power" and "Beauty," or the expressions in architecture

of the sublime and the delightful;—the sublime, indicating man's power to *govern;* the delightful, man's power to *gather.* Great buildings are viewed as displaying man in his governing and gathering capacity; his success being proportionate to his knowledge of how to govern and gather. Governing ability, shews itself in *situation* and *line*, as seen in the natural surroundings chosen for vantage point and background, and the form into which the material is thrown; the "Lamp of Power" revealing itself in the selection of grand natural eminences, and in shaping thereon structures after the model of the celestial city whose length, breadth, and height are equal. Gathering ability, as represented in the "Lamp of Beauty," is seen in *ornamentation;*—the selection and arrangement of such ornament as will be effective, and ever characterised by truthfulness of resemblance to the varied types of beauty in the natural world.

Next is "The Lamp of Life," or the vividness of expression on the part of the intellectual power in its treatment of inert substances. It is the spirit that seizes upon substances, alike in use and outward form, and clothes them with its own nobleness, energy, and passion, until the rough hewn stones are lifeful, and the veined marbles breathe. This Spirit of Life is distinguished from the spirit of death in its power to animate. The spirit of death may act, and imitate, but it is powerless to inspire. Life, in a word, is originality. Should the great architect imitate, his imitation is original, frank, and fearless; while the perfection of his work is not the perfection of execution where workmanship runs ahead of design, but the perfection of growth where design is ever ahead of workmanship.

The two last Lamps are those of "Memory," and "Obedience;" the former ever burning brightly and steadily among those peoples who reverence the past; flaming forth in public

buildings commemorative of national achievements, and shedding its lustre in the erection and the preservation of the homestead, the scene of the sorrows and joys of their family life; the latter, the Lamp of Obedience, revealing a conformity in architecture, as strict and minute and authoritative, as the laws which regulate their religion, policy, and social relations; distinct and general amid all accidents of character and circumstance. The writer's own words are as follows:—"If there be any one condition which, in watching the progress of architecture, we see distinct and general; if, amidst the counter evidences of success attending opposite accidents of character and circumstance, any one conclusion may be constantly and indisputably drawn, it is this: that the architecture of a nation is great only when it is as universal and established as its language; and when provincial differences of style are nothing more than so many dialects."

A three volume work, entitled the "Stones of Venice," appeared in the years 1851 and 1853. It treats of the archæology and history of Venice, unfolding the causes of her strength and glory, of her downfall and decay. Its aim, to use the author's own words, is to shew that the Gothic architecture of Venice had arisen out of, and indicated, a state of pure domestic faith, and national virtue; and its Renaissance architecture had arisen out of, and indicated, a state of concealed national infidelity, and domestic corruption.

The first volume, entitled "The Foundations," unfolds the principles of all noble building, and sets forth the virtues of architecture as three-fold: the virtue of doing the thing it was intended to do in the best way; the virtue of saying the thing it was intended to say in the best words; and the virtue of pleasing us by its presence, whatever it does or says. Next, architecture is considered in its two great divisions of Strength and Beauty; or, in other words, constructive

architecture and ornamental architecture. Constructive architecture treats of the wall, the roof, and the aperture; the history and development of each being considered in its turn. The wall is traced through the successive stages of wall veil, base and cornice,—the pier, with its respective base, shaft and capital, growing out of wall division. The roof is treated in its manifold forms and strengths, shaping itself according to national taste and geographical situation; and the aperture is followed up from the simple opening or perforation exposed to storm and sunshine, to the filled in mullion and strongly panelled door, porched, canopied, or balconied, as the structure may require.

In the second section, which deals with architectural beauty, or the ornamentation of the structure already considered, Ruskin insists upon obedience to three great laws: the first treating of *materials* for ornament; the second, of of *treatment* of ornament; the third, of *arrangement* of ornament. The material for noble ornament is shewn to be the delight of man in the representation of the forms of God's work; the treatment of ornament is his power to seize and portray its essential elements; and the arrangement of ornament the adaptation of its position to the eye, securing for delicate carving a near range of vision, inasmuch as it is not only lost by distance, but led thereby to produce worse effect than rougher work. The volume is prefaced with an outline of the history of the city and her Doges, and concludes with a brilliant description of the drive by road from the gates of Padua, beneath elms and vine festoons, to Mestra, and from thence, by gondola, along the dark waters to Venice.

The second and third volumes shew how Venetian architecture was ever subject to the temper of the State, rising and receding with the growth of the moral and the immoral

dispositions of the people. The second volume, entitled "Sea Stories," is devoted to a study of the buildings marking the Byzantine and Gothic periods; the one, characteristic of the earlier; the other, of the crowning era of Venetian life. The Byzantine School, transplanted from other shores somewhere about the eleventh century, is not viewed in its spirit so much as in its form, inasmuch as Ruskin had not the opportunity of studying the original structures on their native shores. He devoted himself to St. Mark's as the best existent type of this school, and therefrom lays down the following distinguishing features of its architecture: In construction, Incrustation; in outline, the Rounded Arch of varying size; in ornamentation, Breadth and Life. Incrustation, or the overlaying of bricks with costly material, grew out of the necessity of circumstances, the builders having scant access to quarries of precious stone. Cost and physical conditions forced them to make most of the little marble they could command, and it became a question of either studding the masses of brick with blocks, or else dividing the blocks into layers, and therewith covering the surface of the walls. The latter was the method adopted, and as a consequence of this enforced incrustation the following became the leading characteristics of the school: 1. Plinths and cornices used for binding the armour, light and delicate. 2. Science of inner structure abandoned. 3. All shafts solid. 4. Shafts sometimes independent of the structure. 5. Shafts of varied size. 6. Decorations shallow in cutting. 7. The impression of the architecture not dependent on size.

Growing out of this Byzantine Architecture is the school known as Venetian Gothic. Ruskin's opportunities for studying its rise and growth in their original forms enabled him to enter into an analysis of the spirit, or temper of mind from which it sprang. This he declares to be:—"Savage-

ness, or rude wild strength; Changefulness, or the result of the freedom springing forth from such wild strength; Naturalism, or the love of the untrained mind for natural objects for their own sakes, and the effort to represent them frankly, unconstrained by artistic laws; Grotesqueness, or the disposition which delights in fantastic, ludicrous, and sublime images; Rigidity, or the peculiar energy which gives tension to movement, and stiffness to resistance; and Redundancy, or the uncalculating bestowal of wealth to labour. All these features are shown to be characteristic of the Gothic workman, and discoverable in all his workmanship. It is no one or other of them that produces Gothic, "but their union in certain measures. Each one of them is found in many architectures beside Gothic; but Gothic cannot exist where they are not found, or, at least, where their place is not in some way supplied."

The third volume, entitled "The Fall," is devoted to an analysis of Renaissance Architecture, or that of Venetian decline. This era is divided into three periods, distinguished as the Early, the Roman, and the Grotesque, each marking a distinct phase of degeneracy in Venetian life. The architectural characteristic of the first period is an intemperate use of Gothic forms, and a formal rather than a vital imitation of the worst features of the Byzantine School; such intemperance and formalism being a reflection of the spirit of the people. This Early Renaissance was followed by the weaker and more degenerate school of the Roman Renaissance, the ruling feelings of which were Pride of Science, Pride of State, Pride of System and Infidelity. Its architects confounded science and art, and failed to discover that the one had to do with facts, the other with phenomena, and that reason and report were distinct from, and lower than, instinctive sight and feeling. They pandered to luxury

and arrogance, and shaped for the selfish and proud Venetian colossal palaces with their accompanying corridors, pedestals and terraces. They became slaves to the letter that killeth, and sacrificed freedom for technicality, building according to childish rule rather than to noble law.

The låst period of Venetian decline begot the architecture, styled by Ruskin, "Grotesque Renaissance." It was the outcome of an unscrupulous love of pleasure, and its features were the worst and basest of all preceding styles. It was characterised by apathy, mockery, and diseased and ungoverned imagination ; and with it closed the career of the architecture of Europe.

The "Stones of Venice" is prophetic in its tone, and it would be well for us as a people to take to heart its lessons. A nation's history, though uninscribed by the historian's pen, is yet written more truthfully, more lastingly, on the deep wrought blocks of stone that tell of her domesticities, her manufactures, and her religion. All great architecture is the exponent of national virtue, and all debased architecture the exponent of national vice and shame.

Other, and smaller works appeared from John Ruskin's pen during this first period of literary activity. "The King of the Golden River," 1851, written for the entertainment of a child ; a pamphlet, entitled "Pre-Raphaelitism," 1851 ; a Series of Lectures on Architecture, 1853 ; a tract on "The Opening of the Crystal Palace ;" "The Elements of Drawing," 1857; and two Lectures on "Art and its Application to Decoration and Manufacture," entitled "Two Paths," delivered in 1858, and published in 1859. Such is a brief outline of the work accomplished during the first twenty years of Ruskin's manhood.

CHAPTER IV.

Second Period of Literary Activity.

THE two great sections into which we have separated the writings of Ruskin wère distinguished by a change of subject rather than by a pause in activity. Such change however was neither sudden nor unnatural; it was simply the further application to the great questions of Social Science and Political Economy of the principles already applied to Art and Architecture. The characteristic feature in the teaching of Ruskin is his use of principles; and inasmuch as all principles are permanent and universal, it was natural that he should be led from a study of art to a study of architecture; and from architecture, which is the embodiment of a nation's moral temper, to the study of the great social and political questions of national life. Society is a solidarity, and its varied movements parts of an unbroken unity; the laws lying at the root of any one of these movements being representative of the laws that lie at the root of all. Hence the teacher who deals in principles is not restricted in his studies to any one line of movement, but possesses a key to all; and Ruskin, in his mastery of the principles of discovery, accumulation and distribution in the realm of art, eminently qualified himself for their application to the realm of social and economic life. Let any man sit down and carefully read "Modern Painters," "Stones of Venice," and "Seven Lamps of Architecture," and he will inevitably anticipate Ruskin's later writings: so broad are the truths they unfold, so far reaching the conclusions they

arrive at, that the reader finds himself unconsciously applying their principles to his own life and work, whatever the station of his life or the nature of his work may be. The politician will be led to test therefrom the administration of his laws, the clergyman the construction of his sermons, the tradesman the principles of his business transactions, and the artisan the character of his workmanship. The movement, then, from the earlier period to the later, is natural and inevitable; and those who inquire what the greatest art critic in Europe can know of the principles of political economy betray in such inquiry their ignorance of the far reaching interpretation of principles, and of the law of continuity which runs throughout society.

We may arrange this second period of literary activity under four divisions.

First.—Lectures delivered in various parts of England, and dealing with Social and Political Questions; now arranged in volumes, and forming part of the revised series of Ruskin's works.

Second.—Articles originally contributed to magazines; now collected in volumes entitled, "Unto this Last," "Munera Pulveris," and "Time and Tide;" also forming a part of the revised series of works.

Third.—A series of letters to working men entitled, "Fors Clavigera," numbering some ninety parts, and still in course of publication.

Fourth.—Lectures delivered at Oxford during his terms of professorship, collected into five volumes, and likewise forming a part of his revised series of works.

During this period other works of a miscellaneous character have appeared from his pen, including treatises on Botany, Geology, Ornithology, as well as books on the Laws of Art and Prosody for the schools of St. George. But it

will be necessary to restrict this chapter to the limits of the fourfold division before named.

First.—Lectures delivered in various parts of England, and dealing with questions of social life and politics. A volume entitled "Sesame and Lilies" contains three lectures, the subjects of which are "Kings' Treasuries," "Queens' Gardens," and "The Mystery of Life." "Kings' Treasuries" are the stores of truth hidden away in the writings of the world's great men; and the aim of the lecture is to point out what to read, and how. "Queens' Gardens" treats of the true function and sphere of woman; and shows, from the collected teachings of the great and wise of every age, that such function is a guiding and not a determining one; and that the true place of woman is within her gates as "the centre of order, the balm of distress, and the mirror of beauty." "The Mystery of Life" is a study of those perplexing questions which grow out of the spectacles of great genius perishing uselessly, and of powers for good turned into channels of evil and destructiveness; and after viewing the brevity, the vanity, the emptiness, and the disappointment of much in life, it urges home upon us the great lesson that such mysteries simplify themselves only as we nobly strive to do our work, and follow in the wake of our appointed duty.

The "Crown of Wild Olive" contains lectures entitled, "Work," "Traffic," "War," and "The Future of England." The lecture on "Work" unfolds the question of labour and its relations, under the divisions of Work to Play, or the difference between those who work and those who play; Production to Consumption, or the difference between those who produce the means of life and those who consume them; Head to Hand, or the difference between those who work with the head and those who work with the hand; and

Sense to Nonsense, or the difference between those who work wisely and those who work foolishly. The lecture on "Traffic" was delivered before the merchants of Bradford, in response to an invitation to come down and advise with them about their proposed exchange. Its main drift is to show that lectures on architecture will ever fail to give nobility to the buildings of a people so long as the principles which govern their commercial and social life are lacking in righteousness and truth. The subject of "War" is viewed, first, in the light of exercise or play, or the relation it bears to the classes who make it, not to the conscripts who wage it; next, it is considered as aggressive, or the fruit of desire for dominion; and, lastly, as defensive. "The Future of England" is a call upon the higher classes to use their influence and give their time to the training of those beneath them, who, it is shown, are prepared to look up to and follow them, if they, as born leaders, will but do their duty towards them.

"The Queen of the Air" contains three lectures on Greek Myths, or Athena in the Heavens, Athena in the Earth, and Athena in the Heart. In the above lectures Ruskin enters into the history of these myths, tracing them from their original sources, and following their stages of development, finally endeavouring to discover their meaning and significance for the England of to-day. This meaning and significance is, that the Air is given us for our life, the Rain for our thirst and baptism, the Fire for our warmth, the Sun for our light, and the Earth for our meat and rest.

Two lectures on the "Political Economy of Art," delivered in Manchester, appeared in a small volume in 1867, and have since been included in Ruskin's revised series of works, under the title, "A Joy for Ever." The lectures treat of the laws of Discovery, Application, Accumulation, and

Distribution in their relation to Art, and contain very valuable addenda in the form of notes. In their re-published form they embrace other papers on "Education in Art," "Art Schools," and "Social Policy."

Ruskin soon grew dissatisfied with the work of a public lecturer. He found out that people followed him simply to hear what he had to say and how he said it, and not from desire to be taught by him, or to practise what he endeavoured to enforce. The excitement, too, told upon his health, and he eventually abandoned the rostrum for other and wider methods of communicating truth.

Second.—One of these was the contribution of articles to magazines and newspapers. In 1860 he contributed a series of essays to the Cornhill Magazine, entitled "Unto this Last;" but the outcry against them was so loud and fierce that the editor, a friend of Ruskin's, was compelled to prohibit the publication of anything further on this subject from his pen. The editor of Fraser's Magazine then wrote to Ruskin stating that he believed there was something in the theories which "Cornhill" had rejected, and offering to risk the admission into the periodical he represented of any further papers Ruskin might think fit to prepare. Hence, during 1862-3, Ruskin cautiously, and at intervals, forwarded a series of essays on the same subject as before; but, unfortunately, the publisher now interfered, and the papers were again suppressed. These articles on Political Economy, which public and publisher raised their voice and fiat to suppress, have since appeared in two volumes, bearing the titles "Unto this Last," and "Munera Pulveris."

"Unto this Last" treats of the "Roots of Honour, or the responsibilities and duties of those called to fulfil all offices of national trust and service"; "Veins of Wealth,"

or the true sources of a nation's riches; "Qui Judicatis Terram," or the right distribution of such riches; and "Ad Valorem," or the definition of Value, Wealth, Price, and Produce. This work is in reality the central principle of Ruskin's system of Political Economy, and its key note:—Government and co-operation are in all things the laws of life; anarchy and competition the laws of death. He claims to have put all his strength into its creation, holding that it contains the best of his workmanship, and the maturest of his thinkings.

"Munera Pulveris" originally appeared in the form of four essays, but in its present volume form it is divided into six chapters, treating respectively of Definitions, Store-keeping, Coin-keeping, Commerce, Government, and Mastership. The chapter on Definitions specifies Wealth as dealing with the essential properties of things: Money as dealing with conditions of engagement and exchange: Riches as dealing with the due relations of men to each other in regard to material possession, and with the just laws of their association for purposes of labour. In the chapter on Store-keeping, the three following questions are considered:—The nature of the store, or the direction of a nation's labour for right production; the quantity of the store, or the relation of the quantity of any article to the need of the population. And the quantity of the store in relation to currency, or the proportion of the exchange or credit power among the people to the goods stored for exchange. Coin-keeping, or the charge of a country's currency, is defined as the regulation enabling any person presenting a commodity of tried worth in the public market to receive in exchange for it a document giving him claim to the return of its equivalent, in any place, at any time, and in any kind. Commerce is distinguished from currency, which

conveys right of choice out of many things in exchange for one, as the agency by which the power of choice is obtained; while Government is considered in its relation to customs, laws, councils, and their enforcement. The last chapter on mastership is devoted to the duty of the commanding rich to the obeying poor, in the fulfilment of which duty the following laws are to be observed: 1. The production of *useful* things; 2. Useful things in the production of which the workman may lead a *healthy life;* and 3. On the part of the Master *a right appropriation and distribution* of the things produced.

In 1867 Ruskin entered into a lengthy correspondence with a working man named Thomas Dixon, of Sunderland. This correspondence originated out of the agitation for reform which was then rocking the country from north to south. It contains, as the writer says, in the plainest terms, the substance of what he desired to say to the English working men: "The Reform you desire may give you more influence in Parliament; but your influence there will, of course, be useless to you,—perhaps worse than useless,—until you have wisely made up your minds as to what you wish Parliament to do for you; and when you *have* made up your minds about that, you will find, not only that you can do it for yourselves, without the intervention of Parliament; but that eventually nobody *but* yourselves can do it. And to help you, as far as one of your old friends may, in so making up your minds, such and such things are what it seems to me you should ask for, and, moreover, strive for with your heart and might."

The letters forming this correspondence dealt with Co-operation, Contentment, Legislation, Expenditure, Entertainment, Dexterity, Festivity, Things Written, Thanksgiving, Wheat-sifting, Dictatorship, Episcopacy and Dukedom,

Trade Warrant, Percentage, Education, Marriage, Mastership, Land Tenure, Soldiership, Submission and Authority. A better hand-book for working men cannot be found, and he who studies it carefully and as far as lies in his power, applies it to daily life, will find contentment in his lot and happiness in his labour.

Third.—"Fors Clavigera," or a series of letters to Working men, still in course of publication. On the 1st of January, 1871, Ruskin commenced a monthly letter to the Working-men and Labourers of Great Britain under the title of "Fors Clavigera," which title implies that they may be controllers, not creators, of a three-fold power—a *force* which, if they use with *fortitude*, will establish for them their *fortune*. These letters were originally sold at 7d. per copy, but as they increased in bulk the price was raised to 10d., at which they are now published. They deal with all questions which concerns the welfare of the country and her sons; and in them may be found, though apparently without plan, the perfected system of teaching Ruskin seeks to leave to the world. They are full of the wealth of one of the most cultured men of his age, the experience of fifty memorable years, the mature conclusions of a mind long trained to hard thinking, and the prophetic declarations of a man who has seen deeper than most into the sins and follies of his time. Travel, History, Science, Philosophy, Literature, Biographical and Autobiographical incident are all brought into requisition, and made to supply their quota to the one great end—the edification of the English working man. No grade in our social rank is overlooked, for the term workman embraces those who use their heads, while the term labourer refers to those who use their hands. The Statesman, the Squire, the Clergyman, the Master, may all find laws as to their modes of living and relationship. These letters also

contain the laws of Ruskin's ideal society known as the Guild of St. George, the aim of which is to gather together on suitable estates healthful men and women who are prepared to fulfil the appointed tasks, and obey the communal regulations enforcd by its masters. These laws of St. George are simple, and relate to labour, exchange, accumulation of fortune, distribution of wealth, and the regulation of home and civic life. Not that Ruskin ever expects to see them universally adopted in his own land, but he is hopeful that they will be adopted by the coming generations who shall go forth to people the waste places of the earth. It has been said that the best of "Modern Painters" is reproduced in "Fors Clavegera." It may be so, but it takes altogether different forms, and is clothed in a plainer and directer phraseology.

Four.—Lectures delivered at Oxford during Ruskin's term of Professorship. These lectures fill five volumes, and commence with a series of papers on Art in its relation to Religion, Morals, and Use, and on Line, Colour, and Light. This, the first series, was delivered before the University in Hilary Term, 1870. In the Michaelmas Term of the same year six other lectures were delivered on the Elements of Sculpture in their relation to Idolatry, Imagination, Likeness, and Structure. They are collected into a volume entitled, "Aratra Pentelici," or the Ploughs of Pentelicus, a mountain in Attica, rich in its marble veins. In the Lent Term of 1872 ten other lectures were delivered on the relation of Natural Science to Art; these appeared during the same year in volume-form under the title of "The Eagle's Nest." These lectures on the relation of Natural Science to Art were followed by a course on Wood and Metal engraving, in relation to the arts of Florence; and treating also of the technics of engraving on wood

and metal, as well as expounding the engraving of the German School as represented by Sandro Botticelli. The last published volume of Oxford lectures, delivered in the Michaelmas Term of 1873, is entitled, "Val d' Arno," and treats of the thirteenth century art in Pisa and Florence, the works of Niccolo and Giovanni Pisano being the main subject of the treatise. . Ruskin has recommenced the publication of the Oxford lectures since his return to the Slade Professorship, and several are already in pamphlet form on the subject of Art in England as represented in the works of Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Sir F. Leighton, and Kate Greenaway.

This and the previous chapter by no means cover the whole of Ruskin's literary labours. The publication of pamphlets, the editing of art catalogues, the preparation of historic handbooks for the student traveller, and the constant war of correspondence waged for years in the columns of the "Times," the "Telegraph," and the "Pall Mall Gazette," have taxed his strength, and swallowed up many hours of his active life. As we look back at this labour-time, stretching over well nigh half a century, we cannot but feel that John Ruskin has right well fulfilled the Hebrew preacher's command to do whatsoever his hand findeth to do with his might. Every subject he has grappled with has received his honestest and most fearless thought; while every undertaking claiming his service has elicited the bestowal of his full energies and roused the inspiration of his mighty heart. In all his labours he has felt the burden of a duty, and been straitened until it was fulfilled. He gives us in his books the choicest of words in the most perfect of styles. His art criticisms and his principles of architecture are widely accepted; and there are not a few thoughtful men who believe his systems of Social Science and Political

Economy will in due time win a greater respect from the body politic than they have to-day. He has had as many as seven books in the press at once, of which he says, "any one of them was enough to take up the remainder of my life." The following was the plan, now intercepted, which he had purposed to complete during the last decade of his life :—A History of Fifteenth Century Art ; An analysis of Attic Art, fifth century B.C. ; Life of Turner, with analysis of Modern Landscape Art ; Life of Walter Scott, with analysis of Epic Art ; Life of Xenophon, with analysis of the general principles of Education ; Commentary on Hesiod, with final analysis of Political Economy ; and a general description of the Geology and Botany of the Alps.

CHAPTER V.

Social Science.

IT is proposed in this chapter to arrange as far as it is possible the manifold and scattered teachings of Ruskin on the questions of daily life in relation to the home, the mart, and the commonwealth. He has never seen his way to systematise these teachings by throwing them into popular form, or by ranging them collectively under respective divisions; they lie broadcast in all parts of his writings, often appearing where least expected, and re-stated, again and again, with ever-increasing directness and vigour. The reader must prepare himself to meet with much in them distasteful to his own views, and contravening his own practice; but, we must remember that the most helpful teachers are those who tell us what we do not know, who make us face the truth we wish to shun, and who enable us to accomplish that to which we have not yet attained. Ruskin's attitude in all social questions is that of a reformer—a radical reformer—and the odium associating itself with his name is the odium ever associating itself with those who, axe in hand, mercilessly attack our self-blinded errors, and unsparingly lay bare our selfishness and sin. In a word, his teachings on Social Science may be termed a system of "thorough."

He holds that the great evil of life is three-fold, and sums it up as follows:—

First.—Man's ignorance of himself, and the existing state of things he has to do with.

Second.—Man's misery in himself, and the existing state of things he has to do with.

Third.—Man's inclination to let himself, and the existing state of things he has to do with alone, at least in the way of correction.

To rectify these he would first of all have man set about knowing himself and his surroundings—knowledge of himself implying a knowledge of the cunning of his right hand, of the capabilities of his brain, and the excellences and ailments of his moral nature. Until these are manifest to him he will be uncertain as to his true calling, he will have no guarantee for success or happiness in his toil. If the initial steps of such self-knowledge have not been gained in early education, he must proceed at once to gain them for himself; if he has already received hints as to their nature, his next step must be to put them to proof by bringing them into actual play; for only as a man finds out what he can do best, and in the doing of which he is at his best, does he discover his divinely bestowed powers and his divinely appointed task.

In speaking of this self-knowledge, Ruskin says:—"The first thing then a man has to do, if unhappily his parents or masters have not done it for him, is to find out what he is fit for. In which enquiry a man may be very safely guided by his likings, if he be not also guided by his pride. People usually reason in some such fashion as this: 'I don't seem quite fit for a head manager in the firm of ——— & Co., therefore, in all probability, I am fit to be Chancellor of the Exchequer.' Whereas, they ought rather to reason thus: 'I don't seem to be quite fit for head manager in the firm of ——— & Co., but I dare say I might do something in a small greengrocery business; I used to be a good judge of pease'; that is to say, always trying lower instead of trying higher, until they find bottom: once well set on the firm ground, a

man may build up by degrees, safely, instead of disturbing everyone in his neighbourhood by perpetual catastrophes."

As to laws for discovery of strength and weakness in the moral realm he is equally direct and suggestive:—"Make sure that however good you may be, you have faults; that however dull you may be, you can find out what they are; and that however slight they may be, you had better make some —not too painful, but patient—effort to get quit of them. . . . Now, therefore, see that no day passes in which you do not make yourself a somewhat better creature; and in order to do that, find out, first, what you are now. Do not think vaguely about it; take pen and paper, and write down as accurate a description of yourself as you can, with the date to it. If you dare not do so, find out why you dare not, and try to get strength of heart enough to look yourself fairly in the face in mind as well as body. I do not doubt but that the mind is a less pleasant thing to look at than the face, and for that very reason it needs more looking at; so always have two mirrors on your toilet table, and see that with proper care you dress the body and mind before them daily. After the dressing is once over, think no more about it."

Let these rules—plain and old-fashioned though they seem—be patiently and accurately followed, and ignorance of our physical, intellectual, and moral qualifications, as well as uncertainty in our rightful callings and possible developments, will disappear. In the knowledge of ourselves we shall gain that self-dependent power which is the secret of true work, and that self-conscious weakness, which is the secret of true growth. To miscalculate our powers is to be misguided and miserable in our occupations, and to be blind to our dispositions is to stagnate in the gloom of death.

Men, however, are not only to know themselves, but their

knowledge is to extend to "the existing state of things they have to do with." Of such knowledge many may say, 'It is too difficult—too painful for me;' but no matter however difficult, it must be gained; no matter however painful, it must be understood and taken to heart; here, as elsewhere, ignorance is death. In order to possess this knowledge there must be fearlessness and sincerity of search; an eye ever open, blinking no fact, and a heart ever sensitive, smarting beneath all forms of evil. Ruskin says the bishop must know "the history, from childhood, of every living soul in his diocese, and of its present state. Down in the back street, Bill and Nancy, knocking each other's teeth out! Does the bishop know all about it? Has he his eye upon them? Has he *had* his eye upon them? Can he circumstantially explain to us how Bill got into the habit of beating Nancy about the head? If he cannot, he is no bishop, though he had a mitre as high as Salisbury steeple; he is no bishop,—he has no sight of things." The men of wealth must know something of those through whom their wealth is gained. The landlord, snugly housed amongst his estates,—knows he anything of his tenantry on the bleak moor side, or far away in the fog of the fen;—knows he of the rows of crowded tenements in the city gloom, from which he draws his chiefs and rents? The master—does he know his work people; are they so many living souls in his sight, or merely flesh and blood factors in his employ? Does he know them by name, is he acquainted with the condition of their several lots, can he tell you whether their homes are cleanly, their offspring healthy, their morals lofty or low? And the working classes themselves—do they know, or do they care to know of their own surroundings; do they know why their employment is one of pain, and their pleasures marked by excess and brutality;

why the key of many of life's treasures is taken from them, and the unequal share of life's burdens strapped upon their backs? Such knowledge Ruskin urges upon us; he would have us all know the *existing state of things* we have to do with,—whether it be good, or whether it be evil,—for solely upon such knowledge rests the possibility of improvement and the possession of permanent happiness and peace.

Thus we must not leave the work of improvement solely to public measures, nor seek for happiness in spheres foreign to our own. Having gained a knowledge of ourselves and of our surroundings, having discovered what we can do and what needs doing, we must, by patient and persistent use of our powers—no matter how feeble, and in our own sphere—no matter how deplorable,—set about the work of improvement; happiness may then become something more than a far off dream, and the way of our feet one of pleasantness and peace. Ruskin, when speaking upon this question, says, "All effectual advancement towards the true felicity of the human race must be by individual, not by public effort. Certain general measures may aid, certain revised laws guide such advancement, but the measure and law which have first to be determined are those of each man's home. We continually hear it recommended by sagacious people to complaining neighbours (usually less well placed in the world than themselves), that they should 'remain content in the station in which Providence has placed them.' There are, perhaps, some circumstances in life in which Providence has no intention that people *should* be content. Nevertheless, the maxim is, on the whole, a good one; but is peculiarly for home use. That your neighbour should, or should not, remain content with *his* position, is not your business; but it is very much your business to remain content with your own. What is

chiefly needed in England at the present day is to show the quantity of pleasure that may be obtained by a consistent, well administered competence, modest, confessed, and laborious. We need examples of people who, leaving Heaven to decide whether they are to rise in the world, decide for themselves whether they will be happy in it, and have resolved to seek—not greater wealth, but simpler pleasure; not higher fortune, but deeper felicity; making the first of possessions self-possession; and honouring themselves in the harmless pride and calm pursuits of peace.'"

Thus we may best improve ourselves and our conditions by labouring faithfully where providence has placed us and at that which providence has given us to do. It is seldom a man improves himself—and it is always to the injury of those with whom his lot is cast—when he forcibly wrenches himself away from his own station, and seeks other and higher callings and surroundings. A man is not justified in forsaking his station because it is low; he ought rather to remain in it that he may improve it. The reason why the conditions of certain stations remain so unfavourable is owing to the withdrawal of those who, by remaining in them, would have improved them. The existing state of things in the station in which Providence puts a man has first claims upon him; a man's first duty, and generally a man's life duty is to those nearest to him. Ruskin never wearies of reiterating this truth:—Improve the existing state of things you have to do with; to improve them you must know them; and as you improve them you will improve yourself, and become happy in yourself and in your surroundings. Knowledge of, improvement of, and happiness in ourselves and our surroundings,—such is the key note of Ruskin's system of Social Science.

Let us see how he would apply this principle to the home, the mart, and the commonwealth.

1. The relation between parent and child; or, the ideal home.

Ruskin would have all men secure a home; he tells them the first great essential condition in the domestic relation of life is to be the possessor of a substantial structure, becoming for many generations a remaining place for the good man and his descendants. He says :—"The first—not the chief, but the first—piece of good work a man has to do is to find rest for himself; a place for the sole of his foot; his house, or piece of Holy land; and to *make* it so holy and happy, that if by any chance he receive order to leave it, there may be bitter pain in obedience; and also that to his daughter there may yet one sorrowful sentence be spoken in her day of mirth, 'Forget also thy people, and thy father's house.'"

"But I mean to make money, and have a better and better house, every ten years."

"Yes, I know you do.

"If you intend to keep that notion, I have no word more to say to you. Fare you—not well for you cannot; but as you may.

"But if you have sense and feeling, determine what sort of a house will be fit for you;—determine to work for it—to get it—and to die in it, if the Lord will."

"What sort of a house will be fit for me?—but of course, the biggest and finest will be fittest!"

"Again, so says the devil to you; and if you believe him, he will find you fine lodgings enough,—for rent. But if you don't believe him, consider, I repeat, what sort of a house will be fit for you."

"Fit,—but what do you mean by fit?"

"I mean one that you can entirely enjoy and manage; but

which you will not be proud of, except as you make it charming in its modesty. If you are proud of it, it is *un*fit for you,—better than a man in your station of life can by simple and sustained exertion obtain ; and it should be rather under such quiet level than above. Ashesteil was entirely fit for Walter Scott, and Walter Scott was entirely happy there. Abbotsford was fit also for SIR Walter Scott ; and had he been content with it, his had been a model life ; but he would fain still add field to field, and died homeless. . . . . My father's house at Herne Hill was exactly fit for him and me. He left it for the larger one—Denmark Hill, and never had a quite happy day afterwards. It was not his fault, the house at Herne Hill was built on clay, and the doctors said he was not well there ; also, I was his pride, and he wanted to have *me* in a better house,—a good father's cruellest, subtlest temptation."

Ruskin recommends that wherever possible men should build their houses on a scale proportionate to their earlier rather than to their latter conditions, so that such houses may record what they have been, and from what they have risen. He ridicules as purely modern and fallacious the idea, that a house to be well built must necessarily be large and showy. He would neither have them mere sheltering shells of brick and stone, nor monuments of wealth and fashion ; but homes, commensurate with station, ever growing radiant with past associations, and enriching beneath the "golden stain of time."

In such homes he would enthrone woman as queen, bidding her remember that if she be false the strength of her husband will fail, and the future of her children be dark. He holds that social redemption is wrought out by the wisdom and virtue of the wife and mother ; that from her only can the husband draw his inspiration, the children their hope :

"Woman's power is for rule, not for battle; and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision. She sees the qualities of things, their claims, and their places. Her great function is praise: she enters into no contest, but infallibly judges the crown of contest. By her office, and place, she is protected from all danger and temptation. The man, in his rough work in open world, must encounter all peril and trial: to him, therefore, must be the failure, the offence, the inevitable error; often he must be wounded, or subdued; often misled; and always hardened. But he guards the woman from all this; within his house, as ruled by her, unless she herself has sought it, need enter no danger, no temptation, no cause of error or offence. This is the true nature of home—it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division. In so far as it is not this, it is not home; so far as the anxieties of the outer life penetrate into it, and the inconsistently-minded, unknown, unloved, or hostile society of the outer world is allowed by either husband or wife to cross the threshold, it ceases to be home; it is then only a part of that outer world which you have roofed over, and lighted in. But so far as it is a sacred place, a vestal temple, a temple of the hearth watched over by Household Gods, before whose faces none may come but those whom they can receive with love;—so far as it is this, and roof and fire are types only of a nobler shade and light,—shade as of the rock in a weary land, and light as of the Pharos in the stormy sea;—so far it vindicates the name, and fulfils the praise, of Home.

"And wherever a true wife comes, this home is always round her. The stars only may be over her head; the glow-worm in the night-cold grass may be the only fire at her foot; but home is yet wherever she is; and for a noble

woman it stretches far round her, better than ceiled with cedar, or painted with vermillion, shedding its quiet light far, for those who else were homeless."

Inasmuch as the main outlines of Ruskin's system of Education will be considered in the following chapter, we need only say here that the relation between parent and child is to be one of closest confidence,—a confidence growing out of parental love and filial reverence. In writing to a gentleman who was endeavouring to combat the evils besetting the pathway of youth, he says:—"All that you have advised and exposed is wisely said and bravely told; but no advice, no exposure will be of use until the right regulation exists again between the father and the mother and their son. To deserve his confidence, to keep it as the chief treasure committed in trust to them by God: to be the father his strength, the mother his sanctification, and both his chosen refuge, through all weakness, evil, danger, and amazement of his young life."

Every home is to be rich in sources of enjoyment; no other spot is to be happier or more attractive. The shelves are to be stored with books, choice though few; and the windows and garden plots planted with flowers. Part of the discipline is to consist in useful employment; parents encouraging their children in the manufacture of home-made articles, whether for dress or household use. Acquirements gained through education, whether vocal, artistic, or mechanical, are to minister in the spare moments of the day to the sick, the destitute, and the ignorant, parent and child ever remembering that out of idleness and cruelty spring those evils which darken the lives and destroy the hopes of the race, while in usefulness and quiet joy is found the secret of a nation's prosperity, and the root of a people's honour.

2.—The relation of Master to Servant; or, the laws of labour.

The first great responsibility of the master, whether in agriculture, architecture or manufacture, is the life of the workman; and the next, the production of useful and durable work, and this for work's sake rather than for mere monetary returns. "The master becomes necessarily, in the course of his business, the overseer and governor of large masses of men in a most direct way, so that upon him falls, in a great part, the responsibility for the kind of life they lead; and it becomes his duty, not only to be always considering how to produce what he sells in the purest and cheapest forms, but how to make the various employments involved in the production, or transference of it, most beneficial to the men employed."

Ruskin holds that all employments which simply task the workman as a machine are destructive of skill and degrading to manhood, and that in proportion to such destruction and degradation will be inferiority of work. He abhors the severance of thought from labour; and instead of setting one to think and another to execute, he would have thought and execution developed in the same man. Thus the workman would be delivered from the drudgery of toil, and such deliverance he believes would advance excellency of workmanship and beget a more kindly feeling between master and man. Until labourers have a zest in their labour their labour will be in vain, and there can be little doubt that the substitution of machinery for hand-made labour, and the monotony of employment necessitated thereby have done much to kill enthusiasm and cripple skill. Let the following weighty words be marked:—"Now, in the make and nature of every man, however rude or simple, whom we employ in manual labour, there are

some powers for better things: some tardy imagination, torpid capacity of emotion, tottering steps of thought, there are, even at the worst; and in most cases it is all our own fault that they *are* tardy or torpid. But they cannot be strengthened, unless we are content to take them in their feebleness, and unless we prize and honour them in their imperfection above the best and most perfect manual skill. And this is what we have to do with all our labourers, to look for the *thoughtful* part of them, and get that out of them, whatever we lose for it, whatever faults and errors we are obliged to take with it. For the best that is in them cannot manifest itself, but in company with much error. Understand this clearly: you can teach a man to draw a straight line, and to cut one; to strike a curved line, and to carve it; to copy and carve any number of given lines or forms, with admirable speed and perfect precision; and you find his work perfect of its kind: but if you ask him to think about any of those forms, to consider if he cannot find any better in his own head, he stops; his execution becomes hesitating; he thinks, and ten to one he thinks wrong; ten to one he makes a mistake in the first touch he gives to his work as a thinking being. But you have made a man of him for all that. He was only a machine before, an animated tool.

"And observe, you are put to stern choice in this matter. You must either make a tool of the creature, or a man of him. You cannot make both. Men were not intended to work with the accuracy of tools, to be precise and perfect in all their actions. If you will have that precision out of them, and make their fingers measure degrees like cog-wheels, and their arms strike curves like compasses, you must unhumanise them. All the energy of their spirits must be given to make cogs and compasses of themselves. All

their attention and strength must go to the accomplishment of the mean act. The eye of the soul must be bent upon the finger point, and the soul's force must fill all the invisible nerves that guide it, ten hours a day, that it may not err from its steely precision, and so soul and sight be worn away, and the whole human being be lost at last—a heap of sawdust, so far as its intellectual work in this world is concerned ; saved only by its Heart, which cannot go into the forms of cogs and compasses, but expands after the ten hours are over, into fireside humanity. . . It is verily this degradation of the operative into a machine, which, more than any other evil of the times, is leading the mass of the nations everywhere into vain, incoherent, destructive struggling for a freedom of which they cannot explain the nature to themselves. Their universal outcry against wealth, and against nobility, is not forced from them either by the pressure of famine, or the sting of mortified pride. These do much, and have done much in all ages; but the foundations of society were never yet shaken as they are to-day. It is not that men are ill fed, but that they have no pleasure in the work by which they make their bread, and therefore look to wealth as the only means of pleasure. . . . . We have much studied and much perfected, of late, the civilised invention of the division of labour; only we give it a false name. It is not, truly speaking, the labour that is divided; but the men :—Divided into mere segments of men—broken into small fragments and crumbs of life; so that all the litttle piece of intelligence that is left in a man is not enough to make a pin, or a nail, but exhausts itself in making the point of a pin, or the head of a nail. Now it is a good and desirable thing, truly, to make many pins in a day; but if we could only see with what crystal sand their points were polished,—sand of

human soul, much to be magnified before it can be discerned for what it is,—we should think there might be some loss in it also. And the great cry that rises from all our manufacturing cities, louder than their furnace blast, is all in very deed for this,—that we manufacture everything there except men; we blanch cotton, and strengthen steel, and refine sugar, and shape pottery; but to brighten, to strengthen, to refine, or to form a single living spirit, never enters into our estimate of advantages. And all the evil to which that cry is urging our myriads can be met only in one way: not by teaching nor preaching, for to teach them is but to show them their misery, and to preach to them, if we do nothing more than preach, is to mock at it. It can be met only by a right understanding, on the part of all classes, of what kinds of labour are good for men, raising them, and making them happy; by a determined sacrifice of such convenience, or beauty, or cheapness, as is to be got only by the degradation of the workman; and by equally determined demand for the products and results of healthy and ennobling labour."

This lengthy extract will give the reader the gist of Ruskin's position on machine-made *versus* hand-made work, and unfold his views as to the detrimental effects of the so-called "division of labour" which he denounces as the division of men.

Not that he would exclude all machine labour, nor even altogether prohibit steam power; his antagonism is to the *labour* that kills, and to the unlimited multiplication of machinery which leads to the enforced idleness and deterioration of the workman. He enquires how many thousands of pairs of hands are useless, how many thousands of able-bodied men are idle because no man hath called them? He would use all this muscle-force ere he utilized the

forces of nature: gathering his countrymen into ranks and communities he would train and set them to pleasing and useful toil until there were none idle save the dead. Then he would appropriate the forces of nature, storing the waters now wasted in the rainy seasons, deepening the beds of rivers, catching the winds in sails of mill and ship, to give power to the factory and speed to commerce. And if the demand was still greater than could be met by this combination of trained muscle and nature force, he would erect furnaces, and build chimneys, and run steam ships; but even then not at the expense of turning workmen into machines, nor of the destruction of their cunning through the severity and inhumanity of toil. His own words are these: "The general principles by which employment should be regulated may be briefly stated as—vital or muscular power; natural mechanical power of wind, water, and electricity; and artificially produced mechanical power; it is the first principle of economy to use all available vital power first, then the inexpensive natural forces, and only at last to have recourse to artificial power. And this, because it is always better for a man with his own hands to feed and clothe himself, than to stand idle while a machine works for him, and if he cannot by all the labour healthily possible to him, feed and clothe himself, then it is better to use an inexpensive machine—as a windmill or water mill—than a costly one like a steam engine, so long as we have natural force enough at our disposal."

Ruskin's views as to the question of wages have created much discussion, and not a little angry feeling on the part of the employers of labour. He holds that work and wages practically mean the food and lodging given to the workers by the possessors of the soil; and while he would raise the labourer above the standard which simply works for

pay, yet he would have no man underpaid, nor would he employ men at a labour destructive to their manhood. His two central principles as to returns for time and strength given in the production of commodities are, that a man should be paid according to his skill, and risks of all kinds be taken into due consideration. The following are his words:—

"I.—A man should in justice be paid for two hours' work twice as much as for one hour's work, and for n hours' work n times as much, if the effort be similar and continuous.

"II.—A man should in justice be paid for difficult or dangerous work proportionately more than for easy and safe work, supposing the other condition of the work similar.

"III.—If a man does a given quantity of work for me, I am bound in justice to do, or procure to be done, a precisely equal quantity of work for him; and just trade in labour is the exchange of equivalent quantities of labour of different kinds."

As to method of payment he is equally clear and practical. "The quantity of food and air which will enable a man to perform a piece of labour without eventually losing any of his flesh and nervous energy, is as absolutely fixed a quantity as the weight of powder necessary to carry a given ball a given distance. . . . . Let any half-dozen London physicians, of recognised standing, state in precise terms the quantity and kind of food and space of lodging necessary for the healthy life of a labourer in any given manufacture, and the number of hours he may, without shortening his life, work at such business daily, if in such manner he be sustained. Let all masters be bound to give their men a choice between an order for that quantity of food and space of lodging, or the market wages for the specific number of hours of work. Proper laws for the maintenance of families

would require further concession; but in the outset, let but this law of wages be established, and if then we have more strikes, you may denounce them without one word of remonstrance either from sense or sensibility."

All remuneration, regardless of the life of the workman, falls below Ruskin's standard of wage. Pay your men according to their skill; consider the risk they run in your employ; and see to it that the poorest receive that which embraces healthful surroundings and supplies the necessary demands of life.

Further, Ruskin reminds the merchant and manufacturer of their obligations to the public: they are the servants of the nation and exist for its welfare. Just as it is the duty of a soldier to defend a nation, of a pastor to teach it, of a physician to keep it in health, and of a lawyer to enforce justice in it; so is it the duty of a merchant and manufacturer to provide for it. In all these callings there is a vital responsibility, a sacred trust; and upon a consciousness of such responsibility, together with its faithful fulfilment, depends the soundness and prosperity of all national life. No temptation, however subtle; no trial, however terrible, must move from their duty the men who fill these posts of honour and of trust. The soldier must die rather than forsake the ranks; the pastor starve rather than preach with flattering tongue; the physician risk the deadliest disease rather than fly from plague; the lawyer sacrifice brief and fee rather than countenance injustice; and the merchant and manufacturer suffer bankruptcy and beggary rather than adulterate their provisions, manufacture shoddy stuffs, or provide for the public inadequate or destructive material.

He says:—"A good soldier, for instance, mainly wishes to do his fighting well. He is glad of his pay—very properly so, and justly grumbles when you keep him ten years with-

out it—still, his main notion of life is to win battles, not to be paid for winning them. So of clergymen. They like pew-rents, and baptismal fees, of course; but yet, if they are brave and well-educated, the pew-rent is not the sole object of their lives, and the baptismal fee is not the sole purpose of their baptism; the clergyman's object is essentially to baptise and preach, not to be paid for preaching.

"So of doctors. They like fees no doubt—ought to like them; yet if they are brave and well-educated, the entire object of their lives is not fees. They, on the whole, desire to cure the sick; and, if they are good doctors, and the choice were fairly put to them, would rather cure their patient, and lose their fee, than kill him, and get it. And so with all other brave and rightly trained men; their work is first, their fee is second. Very important always, but still *second*. But in every nation, as I said, there are a vast class who are ill educated, cowardly, and more or less stupid. And with these people, just as certainly the fee is first, and the work second, as with brave people the work is first and the fee second. And this is no small distinction. It is the whole distinction in a man: distinction between life and death *in* him, between heaven and hell *for* him. You cannot serve two masters; you must serve one or other. If your work is first with you, and your fee second, work is your master, and the lord of work, who is God. But if your fee is first with you, and your work second, fee is your master, and the lord of fee, who is the devil."

With the brave and rightly trained merchant and manufacturer who realize the vital functions of their calling, and the responsibility growing therefrom, fee is never first; they feel that independently of profits—at all costs—they must be faithful to the nation whose they are and whom they serve: in other words, they are prepared to turn out good

work or die. And such men are conscious that in palming off an adulterated article they are as culpable as any soldier who runs to lessen risk, or any preacher who lies to retain his church.

3. Relation between governors and governed, or the laws of commonwealth.

With his great master, Carlyle, Ruskin holds that a nation's divinely appointed leaders are found in her greatest and wisest men. Such men, in the evolution of national life, will come to the fore, and be, for some little time at least, within the reach of a people's choice. Then it is that a wise people secures them; and having secured them, silently obeys them. This power of wise choice, and this spirit of faithful obedience is the outcome of prior discipline, obedience in the subject ever being promotive of advancement in the law. "Learn to obey good laws, and in a little while you will reach the better learning—how to obey good men, who are living, breathing, unblinded law."

The laws Ruskin enforces in St. George's Guild, and hence we may conclude the laws he would have us as a nation adopt, are those of Florence in the fourteenth century, with certain modifications necessitated by the lapse of five hundred years. They are largely communal, and have to do with the health and education of the people, with supply and demand, and with the accumulation and distribution of wealth. Applied to our own nation they would lay hold of every man, woman, and child, as members of a state, and train, and compel them to follow the work for which nature and education fitted them; they would dispense a people's meat and raiment, providing healthful meat, purchasable at a normal price, and clothing serviceable in texture and beautiful in hue; they would remove the nation's coinage from out the hands of a few prosperous

traffickers, and her lands from under the monopoly of those of favoured birth, coinage and wealth being placed in the nation's hands for the nation's use,—public buildings being the costliest, public treasures the rarest, public lands the most spacious and beautiful; they would enforce the construction of streets in the form of squares, every house being well built and skilfully designed; and they would prohibit the walls of any city enclosing more than five and twenty thousand souls; the law of life observed would be that of co-operation—not the co-operation of a privileged number of persons for their own selfishness,—but the co-operation of all for the good of one another; while the creed which they would seek to develope in each human being whose life they ought to regulate would be :—

"I.—I trust in the Living God, Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of all things and creatures, visible and invisible. I trust in the kindness of His law, and the goodness of His work. And I will strive to love Him and to keep His law, and to see His work while I live.

"II.—I trust in the nobleness of human nature—in the majesty of its faculties, the fulness of its mercy, and the joy of its love. And I will strive to love my neighbour as myself, and even when I cannot, I will act as if I did.

"III.—I will labour, with such strength and opportunity as God gives me, for my own daily bread; and all that my hand finds to do, I will do it with my might.

"IV.—I will not deceive, or cause to be deceived, any human being for my gain or pleasure; nor hurt, nor cause to be hurt any human being for my gain or pleasure; nor rob, nor cause to be robbed any human being for my gain or pleasure.

"V.—I will not kill nor hurt any living creature needlessly, nor destroy any beautiful thing; but will strive to save and

to comfort all gentle life, and guard and perfect all natural beauty upon the earth.

"VI.—I will strive to raise my own body and soul daily into higher powers of duty and happiness; not in rivalship or contention with others, but for the help, delight, and honour of others, and for the joy and peace of my own life.

"VII.—I will obey all the laws of my country faithfully; and the orders of its monarch, so far as such laws and commands are consistent with what I suppose to be law of God; and when they are not so, or seem in any wise to need change, I will oppose them loyally and deliberately—not with malicious, concealed, or disorderly violence.

"VIII.—And with the same faithfulness, and under the limits of the same obedience, which I render to the laws of my country, and the commands of its rulers, I will obey the laws of the society called of St. George . . . . and the order of its masters, and of all persons appointed to be in authority under its masters, so long as I remain a companion called of St. George."

CHAPTER VI.

Education.

EDUCATION seeks to discover and develop the innate powers of child life; its work is to educe as well as to instil, to draw forth the actual from out the possible, as well as to train the actual to shapeliness and use. In all true systems of education development and equipment accompany each other, the child not only being furnished with the implements required in its future life, but receiving at the same time a knowledge of *how* to use them rightly, and *where* to use them to the best of purpose for itself and others. There is a knowledge which is destructive as well as a knowledge which ministers to edification; and to be in possession of facts and theories, to be vested with strength and influence, and yet ignorant withal of their rightful aim and governance, is to be in possession of a dangerous, if not a fatal force. "An educated man," says Ruskin, "is one who has understanding of his own uses and duties in the world, and, therefore, of the general nature of the things done and existing in the world; and who has so trained himself, or been trained, as to turn to the best and most courteous account whatever faculties or knowledge he has." Thus, the great end of education is to get out of the child its best possibilities, and so to train them as to enable it to use them in the best possible manner, in the station and at the work to which it is called.

To this great end Ruskin would start with the child in the first stages of its infant life. He asks:—"When do you

suppose the education of a child begins? At six months old it can answer smile with smile, and impatience with impatience. It can observe, enjoy, and suffer, acutely, and, in a measure, intelligently. Do you suppose it makes no difference to it that the order of the house is perfect and quiet, the faces of its father and mother full of peace, their soft voices familiar to its ear, and even those of strangers, loving; or that it is tossed from arm to arm, among hard, or reckless, or vain minded persons, in the gloom of a vicious household, or the confusion of a gay one? The moral disposition is, I doubt not, greatly determined in those first speechless years. I believe especially that quiet, and the withdrawal of objects likely to distract, by amusing, the child, so as to let it fix its attention undisturbed on every visible least thing in its domain, is essential to the formation of some of the best powers of thought."

Few parents realise that the crystallisation of child character is progressing in these first speechless years, that every look and sound leave their impress long ere they can be translated by the maturer intelligence of the child. As to what the surroundings of child life are to be, as far as it is possible to secure them, the following letter will unfold :—

Brantwood, Coniston,
Lancashire, 23rd Nov., 1881.

My dear ——,

"I have never written a pamphlet on nurseries; first, because I never write about anything except what I know more of than most other people; secondly, because I think nothing much matters in a nursery—except the mother, the nurse, and the air.

"So far as I have any notion or guess in the matter my-

self, beyond the perfection of those three necessary elements, I should say, the rougher and plainer everything the better—no lace to cradle cap, hardest possible bed and simplest possible food according to age, and floor and walls of the cleanablest.

"All education to beauty is first—in the beauty of gentle human faces round a child; secondly, in the fields—fields meaning, 'grass, water, beasts, flowers, and sky.'

"Without these, no man can be educated humanly. He may be made a calculating machine—a walking dictionary—a painter of dead bodies—a twangler or scratcher on keys or cat-gut—a discoverer of new forms of worms in mud. But a properly so-called human being—never.

"Pictures are, *I believe*, of no use whatever by themselves. If the child has other things right, round it, and given to it,—its garden, its cat, and its window to the sky and stars,—in time, pictures of flowers, and beasts, and things in Heaven, and Heavenly earth, may be useful to it. But see first that its realities are heavenly.

"I am, &c.,

"J. RUSKIN."

The surroundings recommended by Ruskin in this letter will be seen, by reference to a previous chapter, to be mainly the surroundings of his own childhood; and truly we cannot have a better proof of their value than in their effect upon his own life. The sights and sounds of our crowded towns and cities, of our smoke-stained villages and blackened heaths, are destructive to health and heart of child-life. The strongest soul is dependent upon environment; early associations are life-long factors in the character of the greatest men. If the child is father to the man, and if environment is no mean factor in the shaping of the child,

there is depth of meaning in the closing sentence of this letter :—"See first that its surroundings are heavenly."

He is equally clear and suggestive when he treats of the training of youth, denominate by him the forming time, in which a man makes himself, or is made, what he is for ever. In the appendix to the fourth volume of "Modern Painters" is the following striking passage :—"The whole period of youth is one essentially of formation, edification, instruction,—I use these words with their weight in them; intaking of stores, establishment in vital habits, hopes, faiths. There is not an hour of it but is trembling with destinies, not a moment of which, once passed, the appointed work can never be done again, or the neglected blow struck on the cold iron. Take your vase of Venice glass out of the furnace, and strew chaff over it in its transparent heat, and recover that to its clearness and rubied glory when the north wind has blown upon it; but do not think to strew chaff over the child fresh from God's presence, and to bring the heavenly colours back to him—at least in this world."

Are not these the words of a prophet who is seeking to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children? There is no diviner gift than life—no weightier responsibility than parentage. Our children come bright from God's presence, radiant with the light of heaven, His latest revelation of Himself to our care-hardened lives. Do we treasure the lessons they unfold; do we seek to retain the glory which they reveal? Are we nursing the divine germ for fuller development, and taking heed lest in word or deed we offend these little ones whose angels behold the face of their Father which is in heaven? These questions lie at the root of all education, and Ruskin never wearies of driving them home.

From environment he passes to the cultivation of the

physical organisation. Strength, and beauty of physique, are to be sought through discipline; and for this end schools are to be established in open spaces, amidst fresh air and rural surroundings, so that riding, running, swimming, and all honest personal exercises of offence and defence, together with music and the dance, may be encouraged as primal heads of bodily education. In "Time and Tide" he says:—"The body must be made as beautiful and perfect in its youth as it can be, wholly irrespective of ulterior purpose. If you mean afterwards to set the creature to business which will degrade its body and shorten its life, first, I should say, simply,—you had better let such business alone;—but if you must have it done, somehow, yet let the living creature whom you mean to kill, get the full strength of its body first, and taste the joy, and bear the beauty of youth. After that, poison it, if you will. Economically, the arrangement is a wiser one, for it will take longer in the killing, than if you began with it younger; and you will get an excess of work out of it which will more than pay for its training."

Not only are bodily acccomplishments to be *taught*, but mental graces are to be *developed*. These graces, which Ruskin believes to be innate in every right-minded child, are Reverence and Compassion. For the development of reverence three things are essential:—Tuition from masters of high moral tone who will at once secure the love and respect of those whom they teach; the patient exposition of incidents in historic records which recount the heroic deeds of the world's great men; and a revelation to the child of the smallness of its own attainments when brought into comparison with those of others. Compassion is to be developed by counting it shameful and cowardly to do a cruel thing, unmanly and criminal to inflict pain

on all weak creatures, and in daily disciplining the child to all offices of practical help.

The development of these mental graces is to be followed by an enforcement of five cardinal virtues:—Truthfulness, Justice, Temperance, Bravery, and Obedience. Truthfulness implies accuracy of statement in all principles of honour, and accomplishments of language in daily speech; the word is to become the bond, and conversation free from exaggeration. Justice consists in granting to every human being due aid in the development of such faculties as it may possess for action and enjoyment—primarily for useful action. Temperance is the power which governs intensest energy, rightly directing its aim, and wisely controlling its force, and getting out of it the greatest amount of usefulness and enjoyment it can possibly yield. Courage is the spirit of fearlessness which responds in spite of all risk; and Obedience the promptness which fulfils, and the steadfastness which endures in the fulfilment of the manifold duties of life.

Equally pertinent are his suggestions on the cultivation of the intellectual forces. He recommends that early in life the child should be grounded in the Greek, Latin, French, and German languages, not so much with an eye to fluency of speech or accuracy of translation therein, but in order to secure them as aids in the mastery of the mother tongue. "In order to deal with words rightly, this is the habit you must form. Nearly every word in your language has been first a word of some other language—of Saxon, German, French, Latin, or Greek; (not to speak of Eastern and primitive dialects). And many words have been all these;—that is to say, have been Greek first, Latin next, French or German next, and English last: undergoing a certain change of sense and use on the lips of each nation;

but retaining a deep vital meaning, which all good scholars feel in employing them, even at this day. If you do not know the Greek alphabet, learn it; young or old, girl or boy—whoever you may be, if you think of reading seriously (which, of course, implies that you have some leisure at command), learn your Greek alphabet; then get good dictionaries of all these languages, and whenever you are in doubt about a word, hunt it down patiently. Read Max Müller's lectures thoroughly, to begin with; and, after that, never let a word escape you that looks suspicious. It is severe work; but you will find it, even at first, interesting, and, at last, endlessly amusing."

In the study of History he would have the child trained to work from points of centre, specially selecting for such the history of those great cities which have been the seat of their country's life, and more or less factors in the growth of the world. He names, as the most prominent of such, London, Paris, Florence, Venice, Rome, and Athens, and the works recommended for their respective study are—for London, Stanley's "Westminster Abbey;" for Florence and Venice, Sismondi's "Italian Republics;" for Rome, Livy, Horace, and Gibbon; for Athens, Herodotus, Thucidides, and her poets.

Along with a study of the history of these cities he recommends a study of their literature, selecting Shakespeare as representative of London, Marmontel of Paris, Dante of Florence, Victor Carpaccio of Venice, Virgil of Rome, and Plato of Athens. Those who propose to follow out this plan will find many hints as to method and interpretation in the pages of "Fors Clavigera," especially in relation to the study of Dante, Carpaccio, and Marmontel.

The child is also to be trained in a knowledge of the sciences; not in order to make it a cold and cruel

spectator, or a listless observer of the wonders of the universe, but that it may have a practical knowledge of surrounding things. In this realm Ruskin's classification is three-fold: Botany, Geology, and Ornithology; the study of such commencing with the district in which the child resides. He is to know the flora of his own neighbourhood, the history of the soil on which he has been reared, as well as the note and habit of every bird that warbles over him its morning song. Ruskin's methods of unfolding these sciences will be found in his works entitled "Proserpina," "Deucalion," and "Love's Meinie."

Thus, Ruskin would open out life to the child, and shape the child for life; thus he would cultivate sight and sentiment; and in order to save from the knowledge that puffeth up—the pride that so often comes with learning—he would secure as the presiding spirit and the pervading temper of every life the three-fold influence of admiration, hope, and love;—the dispositions which discern and delight in all that is beautiful in visible form, and lovely in human temper; which recognise by true foresight better things to be reached hereafter, and pulse with tenderness towards all things human, living and lovely.

The reader may be prompted to say that such system of education is altogether impracticable. So it would be if it were proposed to apply it indiscriminately to every child. But this, Ruskin does not for a moment suggest; indeed he is bitterly opposed to any hard and fast curriculum, holding that no two children are altogether adapted for the self-same system of instruction, or for the self-same end in life. He tells us that a child's powers are fixed at birth; and that as it is vain to seek to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, so it is vain to spend your strength and time and money in striving to get a Turner or a Titian, a Stephenson or a Living-

stone out of second and third rate mental and moral stuff. His words are: "Take most pains with the best material. Many conscientious masters will plead for the exactly contrary iniquity, and say you should take the most pains with the dullest boys. But that is not so (only you must be very careful that you know which are the dull boys; for the cleverest look often very like them). Never waste pains on bad ground; let it remain rough, though properly looked after and cared for; it will be of best service so; but spare no labour on the good or what has in it capacity of good. . . . . . of what unspoiled stuff you find to hand, cut out the best shapes there is room for; shapes unalterable, if it may be, for ever. 'The best shapes there is room for,' since, according to the conditions around them, men's natures must expand or remain contracted; and yet more distinctly, let me say, 'the best shapes that there is *substance* for,' seeing that we must accept contentedly infinite difference in the original nature and capacity, even at their purest; which is the first condition of right education to make manifest to all persons—most of all to the persons chiefly concerned. That other men should know their measure, is, indeed, desirable; but that they should know it themselves, is wholly necessary."

"'By competitive examination of course?' Sternly, no! but under absolute prohibition of all violent and strained effort—most of all envious or anxious effort—in every exercise of body and mind; and by enforcing on every scholar's heart, from the first to the last stage of his instruction, the irrevocable ordinance of the third 'Fors Clavigera,' that his mental rank among men is fixed from the hour he was born,—that by no temporary or violent effort can he train, though he may seriously injure the faculties he has; that by no manner of effort can he increase them; and that

his best happiness is to consist in the admiration of powers by him for ever unattainable, and of arts, and deeds, by him for ever inimitable."

Thus it will be seen the great end of education, according to the system of Ruskin, is the discovery of mental rank and the preparation of the same for its rightful sphere and labour. This rank must be *found*—it cannot be *manufactured*. "You can't manufacture man, any more than you can manufacture gold. You can find him, and refine him: you dig him out as he lies nugget-fashion in the mountain stream; you bring him home; and you make him into current coin, or household plate, but not one grain of him can you originally produce."

A nation's manhood is the gift of heaven; the nation may fail to discover it, or waste it when discovered; but it can no more add one cubit to its stature, or one ounce to its avoirdupois as far as intrinsic worth is concerned, than it can alter or increase in nature and in quantity the veins of mineral wealth beneath its soil. Of all peoples it may be said, "Unto you a son is born; unto you a child is given;" and it is a proof of a people's wisdom when they know, and enthrone, their choicest sons, duly distinguishing the rank of all their other children, and distributing them according to their several ability. Ruskin's words are as follows:—"You have a certain quantity of a particular sort of intelligence, produced for you annually by providential laws, which you can only make use of by setting it to its proper work, and which any attempt to use otherwise involves the dead loss of so much human energy. Well, then, supposing we wish to employ it, how is it to be best discovered and refined? It is easily enough discovered. To wish to employ it is to discover it. All you need is, a school of trial in every important town, in which those idle farmers' lads whom their masters never can keep out of mischief, and

those stupid tailors' 'prentices, who are always stitching the sleeves in wrong way upwards, may have a try at this other trade." Or again :—" It is not, of course, in my power here to enter into details of schemes of education ; and it will be long before the results of experiments now in progress will give data for the solution of the most difficult questions connected with the subject, of which the principal one is the mode in which the chance of advancement in life is to be extended to all, and yet made compatible with contentment in the pursuit of lower avocations by those whose abilities do not qualify them for the higher. But the general principle of trial schools lies at the root of the matter—of schools, that is to say, in which the knowledge offered and discipline enforced shall be all a part of a great assay of the human soul, and in which the one shall be increased, the other directed, as the tried heart and brain will best bear, and no otherwise ; and one thing, however, I must say, that in this trial I believe all emulation to be a false motive, and all giving of prizes a false means. All that you can depend upon in a boy, as significant of true power, likely to issue in good fruit, is his will to work for the work's sake, not his desire to surpass his schoolfellows ; and the aim of the teaching you give him ought to be, to prove to him and to strengthen in him his own separate gift, not to puff him into swollen rivalry with those who are everlastingly greater than he : still less ought you to hang ribands and favours about the neck of the creature, who is the greatest, to make the rest envy him. Try to make them love him and follow him, not struggle with him."

Ruskin is equally urgent in his call for sympathy with the aspirations and advancement of the young. If the work of the youth is bold and insolent he would repress it with firmness and contempt ; if slovenly he would spur to

rouse from indolence; or if a vain and foolish ambition is leading a lad to waste himself in striving to become what he can never possibly be, he would chide, at first gently, but if to no purpose, then sternly and unsparingly. But, on the other hand he would guard all the promising buds of youth from the chill of the world's scorn, from the frost of its unenthusiastic and cynical criticism. If we have praise we are to give it to the deserving young, for the old, if they be great, are beyond it; if we have help we are to bestow it to the inexperienced and weak. To withhold early help is fatal alike to those from whom withheld, and to the parents or community withholding it.

Such, then, is the system of education which Ruskin would enforce. Starting with the child from its first speechless years he would secure for it surroundings that are heavenly, remembering that the influence of parent, of home, and of nature leave their impress for ever on the rapidly crystallising disposition; and that the measure of what it becomes in this formative period of youth will be the measure of all it can ever hope to achieve in life. He further reminds us that life is meant by God to be a full complement of parts; a body strong and beautiful; a mind open to and stored with the great facts of the world of nature and of the world of man, and a vigorous moral disposition from out which the virtues and graces spring with a natural freshness and retain an unwithering bloom. And, lastly, he tells us, and repeatedly tells us, that we cannot manufacture, we can only train; that with all our school-boards and modern codes we cannot create, we can only take the material as we have it from God, and, discovering its nature, shape it as best we may for its God-appointed work. Is there after all anything so impracticable in these simple rules? While, in their entirety, they do not apply to

every child, inasmuch as every child is not fitted to receive the full measure of them, yet no child is excluded; the poorest in station, the feeblest in intellect are considered, and provided for in their general sweep. "I believe *every man in a christian kingdom ought to be equally well educated.* But I would have his education to purpose; stern, practical, irresistible, in moral habits, in bodily strength and beauty, in all faculties of mind capable of being developed under the circumstances of the individual, and especially in the technical knowledge of his own business; but yet, infinitely various in its effort, directed to make one youth humble, and another confident; to tranquillize this mind, to put some spark of ambition into that; now to urge and now to restrain!"

CHAPTER VII.

Art.

IN the third chapter of this book, which contains the analysis of Ruskin's great works on art and architecture, the subject of the present chapter was largely foreshadowed; nevertheless, as we are addressing ourselves mainly to the uninitiated, the repetition will be helpful, for only thereby can new truths be impressed upon the mind. Possibility of culture in the field of art is within reach of all: not that all can be artists, nor all appreciate in the same measure the manifestations of God in nature, or their delineations by the hands of men; but perception of beauty is possible to all, and power to make some spot beautiful within reach of all. A knowledge of the laws of art promotes the attainment of these ends; thereby our eyes are opened to behold the works of Him of whom it is said, "He maketh everything beautiful in its time," and we are encouraged to make ourselves and our surroundings lovely. All aid to such culture is worthy of our attention; and if, by the perusal of this chapter, any reader is led to clearer vision in beholding the works of nature, or to see a meaning in the work of the artist unseen before; or, if some young soul is prompted to bring into trial its instinctive powers of art, and encouraged in the cultivation of things lovely, it will answer the end for which it is written. It does not profess to be either a systematic or exhaustive arrangement of Ruskin's canons of art, but simply a collection of some of the broad principles whereby he tests the artist's strength, unfolds the artist's

duty, and trains us to perceive the artist's power. We will look, first, at his definition of true art; then treat of the laws to be observed in its cultivation; and lastly, consider its special function—individual and national.

1.—Ruskin's definition of true art.

Perhaps we shall better understand his central idea of true art by shewing wherein he distinguishes art from science. In the third volume of "Stones of Venice" this difference is declared to be two-fold, namely, in the nature of their actions, and in the nature of the things with which they deal. In action,—science *knows*, art *produces;* in nature of things dealt with,—science treats of things *as they are;* art, with things as they *affect the soul.* The one deals with facts, the other with phenomena: or, to take Ruskin's illustration: "Science informs us that the sun is ninety-five millions of miles distant from, and 111 times broader than, the earth: that we and all the planets revolve round it; and that it revolves on its own axis in 25 days, 14 hours, and 4 minutes. With all this, art has nothing whatever to do. It has no care to know anything of this kind. But the things which it does care to know are these: that in the heavens God had set a tabernacle for the sun, 'which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.'"

Art, then, sees into the soul of things. Not that it despises the facts unfolded by science, but piercing them with instinctive glance it seizes and declares their spiritual meaning. It not only takes cognisance of "truths of aspect," but its main function is to discover "truths of essence." And hence it is as much vaster in its field than science, "as the soul is larger than the material creation."

This prepares us for Ruskin's further definition : — All great art is revelation ; and all great art is praise.

All great art is revelation. We have just seen that in every object there is a dual nature—an aspect and an essence. In a tree, for example, there are not only the laws of radiation and individuality which appeal to the senses, but behind these lies a law of mystery, of which radiation and individuality are but the outward form. In every mountain range there is not only altitude and outline, but an under-meaning of majesty revealing "the strength of the hills to be His also." In every human countenance there are lines and shades and features distinguishing one man from another, yet these are but the expressions of the *soul*, the inscription of the invisible force—the spirit within. Now true art pierces through all appearances ; it passes by the aspect and secures the essence, of which aspect is the clothing. There are few men who possess this penetrative power ; the men who do—the men who see—and who by their representations make others see what they see themselves, are true artists, and their work true art. All else is mere imitation ; no matter how accurate the line, how true the colour, how vast the scale on which the work is executed, it is mere imitation, cold mechanism, "dead perfection," nothing more. The true artist sees, and makes others see. Note the following extract taken from "Modern Painters" :—"We constantly recognise things by their least important attributes, and by help of very few of these : and if these attributes exist not in the imitation, though there may be thousands of others far higher and more valuable, yet if those be wanting, or imperfectly rendered, by which we are accustomed to recognise the object, we deny the likeness ; while, if these be given, though all the great and valuable and important attributes may be wanting, we affirm the likeness. Recognition is no

proof of real and intrinsic resemblance. We recognise our books by their bindings, though the true and essential characteristics lie inside. A man is known to his dog by the smell, to his tailor by the coat, to his friend by the smile; each of these knows him, but how little, or how much, depends upon the dignity of the intelligence. That which is truly and indeed characteristic of the man, is known only to God. One portrait of a man may possess exact accuracy of feature, and no atom of expression; it may be, to use the ordinary terms of admiration bestowed on such portraits by those whom they please, 'as like as it can stare.' Everybody, down to his cat, would know this. Another portrait may have neglected or misrepresented the features, but may have given the flash of the eye, and the peculiar radiance of the lip, seen on him only in his hours of highest mental excitement. None but his friends would know this. Another may have given none of his ordinary expressions, but one which he wore in the most excited instant of his life, when all his secret passions and all his highest powers were brought into play at once. None but those who had then seen him might recognise *this as like.* But which would be the most truthful likeness of the *Man?* The first gives the accident of the body—the sport of climate, and food, and time—which corruption inhabits and the worm waiteth for. The second gives the stamp of the soul upon the flesh; but it is the soul seen in the emotions which it shares with many, which may not be characteristic of its essence—the result of habit, and education, and accident—a gloze, whether purposely worn or unconsciously assumed, perhaps totally contrary to all that is rooted and real in the mind which it conceals. The third has caught the trace of all that was most hidden, and most mighty, when all hypocrisy, and all habit, and all petty and passing emotion—the ice, and the

bank, and the foam of the immortal river—were shivered and broken, and swallowed up in the awakening of its inward strength; when the call and claim of some divine motive had brought into visible being those latent forces and feelings which the spirit's own volition could not summon, nor its consciousness comprehend; which God only knew, and God only could awaken—the depth of the mystery of its peculiar and separating attributes. And so it is with external nature: she has a body and a soul like man; but her soul is the Deity. It is possible to represent the body without the spirit; and this shall be like, to those whose senses are only cognisant of body. It is possible to represent the spirit in its ordinary and inferior manifestations; and this shall be like, to those who have not watched for its moments of power. It is possible to represent the spirit in its secret and high operations; and this shall be like, only to those to whose watching they have been revealed. All these are truth; but according to the dignity of the truths he can represent or feel, is the power of the painter, and the justice of the judge."

This power to see and feel is ever instinctive: it cannot be manufactured. You may train it, or you may destroy it; but make it, or acquire it—never. It is God's gift; a power He dispenses or withholds at His will; a power, the bestowal of which puts a man into possession of the secrets of His nature and the meaning of His works. It is independent of all rules; its mightiest energies manifest themselves without effort; it spends no time in selection or arrangement; its conceptions are instantaneous; it cannot tell you why it did that thing, nor how; it did it because it could not help doing it, and because it could not do it in any other way. "From the bee," says Ruskin, "to Paul Veronese, all master workers work with this awful and inspired unconsciousness."

Further—all great art is praise. It is the expression of the passionate delight of a great soul in the objects it loves most to contemplate. No great painting was ever produced by a passionless hand; the artist must admire ere he can reveal. The habitual attitude of the true artist's mind is reverence, and as you look upon his work you behold the expression of its adoration. "Art is valuable or otherwise, only as it expresses the personality, activity, and living perception of a good and great soul; it may express and contain this with little help from execution, and less from science; and if it have not this, if it show not the vigour, perception, and invention of a mighty human spirit, it is worthless. Worthless, I mean, as *art;* it may be precious in some other way, but, as art, it is nugatory. Once let this be well understood among us, and magnificent consequences will soon follow. Let me repeat it in other terms, so that I may not be misunderstood. All art is great, and good, and true, only so far as it is distinctively the work of manhood in its entire and highest sense; that is to say, not the work of limbs and fingers, *but of soul.*" *

Or, again:—"As soon as the artist forgets his function of praise in that of imitation, his art is lost. His business is to give, by any means, however imperfect, the idea of a beautiful thing; not, by any means, however perfect, the realisation of an ugly one. In the early and vigorous days of art, she endeavoured to praise the saints, though she made but awkward figures of them. Gradually becoming able to represent the human body with accuracy, she pleased herself greatly at first in this new power, and for about a century decorated all her buildings with human bodies in different positions. But there was nothing to be praised in persons who had no other virtue than that of possessing bodies, and no other

* The italics are ours.

means of expression than unexpected manners of crossing their legs. Surprises of this nature necessarily have their limits, and the Arts founded on Anatomy expired when the changes of posture were exhausted."

A great artist, then, is one who sees, and one who feels, and one who is in possession of a power to express his sight and sentiment; he being the greatest whose sight and sentiment take in the loftiest truths, and give to them the faithfulest portrayal. And he is the best judge of art who has the power to see furthest into the representations of the artist, and enters most fully into sympathy with the passions therein made manifest.

2.—Laws to be observed in the cultivation of the art faculty.

Though the powers of the artist are a gift and not an acquirement, such powers are by no means to be neglected; and though when at full strength they become impatient of rule, and act independently of it, yet such freedom is never the freedom of license, but of restraint. The men most independent of rules are independent of them only as they submit themselves to other and higher powers: freed from formalism, they are captives to a divine law. Such law they cannot define; all they know is that they are compelled to obey it; it reveals itself to them, and dominates them: they are no longer their own. The uninitiated reader must not suppose that, when Ruskin speaks of freedom from rule and exemption from effort as characteristics of the great artist, he implies either carelessness or recklessness; he refers to the freedom of captivity and the repose of strength.

However great the genius, discipline is essential for its right direction and its highest use; undisciplined, it may run to waste, or, what is worse, lay all around it waste in

its destructive play. Hence Ruskin defines an artist as one who has submitted to a law it was painful to obey, that he might bestow a delight it was gracious to bestow. Not that the term painful implies an obedience irksome or distasteful in its nature, but an obedience willingly accepted and joyously fulfilled; nevertheless, an *obedience;*—a submission and discipline—or, in other words, a strait gate through which all must pass who are to be kings in the realm of art. No great work is wrought without labour, and though the finely drawn line, and quiet strength discoverable in a painting, may point to consummate ease, yet such ease is purchasable only at the cost of hours of exercise, and days of severest toil; hence the aphorisms xxi. and xxii. in the "Laws of Fésole": "When you would do your best, stop, the moment you begin to feel difficulty. Your drawing will be the best you can do; but you will not be able to do another so good to-morrow. When you would do *better* than your best, put your full strength out, the moment you feel a difficulty. You will spoil your drawing to-day; but you will do better than your to-day's best, to-morrow."

The laws the artist is to learn to obey cover the three-fold divisions of outline, colour, and shade. Of these, Ruskin says, outline, in perfection, is the most arduous; nevertheless it is to be the initial step in all art training, and no student is to count himself master of it until he can *see* the end of it, though *reach* that end he never can. Colour, he tells us, is easy, if we can see colour, but impossible if we cannot; while to shade is exceedingly difficult—only a few masters having reached the perfections of light and shadow. Yet the majority may arrive at such perfection as will enable them to produce good work.

Having attained proficiency in these three divisions the following laws are laid down as essential in all true art.

1.—"In drawing, try to represent the *appearance* of things, never what you know the thing to be," in other words, draw what you *see*, and not what you know.

2.—"Those appearances you are to test by the application of scientific laws relating to aspect; and to learn, by accurate measurement, and the most fixed attention, to represent with absolute fidelity;" or, draw what you see *as you see it*—accurately.

3.—"Having learned to represent actual appearances faithfully, if you have any human faculty of your own, visionary appearance will take place to you which will be nobler and more true than any actual or material appearance; and the *realisation* of this is the function of every fine art, which is founded absolutely, therefore, in truth, and consists absolutely in imagination;" or, treat your facts imaginatively.

In order to simplify these laws let us illustrate them respectively by tracing their fulfilment in a well known painting. We shall thus see wherein lies their application to real work.

Most readers will have seen an engraving, if not the original painting from the hand of Turner, of a picture known as "The Fighting Téméraire." The shadows of evening are deepening, and the sun throws a farewell flood of glory from the departing day; above, myriads of cloud-forms are aglow with its light, and the crescent moon steals forth upon her nightly march; beneath, the waters, already darkening, reflect a sheen as of a pathway of gold, crossed here and there by the boats of the returning toilers of the sea. In the foreground is a huge French man-o'-war, with fractured hull, towed to its last haven by a small steam tug; the day of its glory for ever departed, it will sail the seas no more.

Look closely into this picture, and you will see the fulfilment of the three laws now under consideration.

1.—Draw what you *see*,—not what you know. Now, note first, there are ropes left out in the painting which we know are to be found in the vessel ; the yards are seemingly unsupported, the masts appear to be without the necessary rigging. How is this ? From the distance at which Turner sketched the ship the rigging was invisible—beyond the range of his eye ; he knew it was there, but he was not painting what he knew to be there, but what he *saw* was there. Likewise the stern windows, and port holes of distant ships are all omitted ! Turner knew this, but not seeing them at the point from which he painted, according to the rule paint what you *see*, and not what you *know*, he left them out.

2.—Draw *accurately* what you see. Turn now to the sky and background of the painting, and you will find this second rule faithfully fulfilled. All the cloud-forms are taken from, and are true to, cloud-forms in nature. The rays of light, the shadows cast from the cloudlets, the infinity of grandeur in sky, as well as the ripples on the water, are all accurate representations of these as seen in nature, and not the product of the fancyings of the studio.

3.—Treat your facts *imaginatively ;* and in a marvellous manner does Turner in the above instance obey this law. The setting sun images forth the departing glory of the old Téméraire, while the first quarter of the new moon is representative of the ascendancy of steam power over the old wooden ships with their sweep of canvas sail, as seen in the tug towing the vessel into port. There seems to be a sadness too in the old sun as he takes his last farewell of the fighting ship he has so often companioned on the deep : no more will the dawn cheer the eye of the weary watch, never again will the light gleam on the swelling sails, the sun has

aided the captain in his last reckoning, the days of warfare are over, the vessel's work is done.

This function of the imagination, as will be remembered, is three-fold :—Associative, or the power to create new forms through combination; penetrative, or the power to apprehend; and contemplative, or the mode in which the associative and penetrative faculties work. It is the wealth of this imaginative power which gives greatness to the artist, and in proportion to his faculty for displaying it will be his rank as a painter and the worth of his work.

3.—The special function of art.

Has art a noble sphere, or is it but a useless pursuit filling up the hours of the idle; and satisfying the whim of the connoisseur? Ruskin tells us it can only be studied rightly when undertaken for the furtherance of useful ends; and that it can no more be taken up successfully as a pastime, than playing at soldiers can train for the field. The true artist submitted to the law that it was painful to obey, in order to bestow a delight which it was gracious to bestow. The special function of art is in the bestowment of this delight.

Art is not only a discipline to the artist, but through him it becomes educative and delightful to the individual. The work of a true picture is to get at the imaginative faculty of the beholder, not only quickening, but training it by the representation of truth. Should the imaginative faculty fail to be roused, then there is something wrong either on the part of the spectator or picture; should the picture be demonstrably true, the probabilities are that it is in the spectator; should even the picture be true, unless it arouses the imagination, it fails in its function;—it must first waken and then teach.

But it may be said, why not cultivate the imagination by bringing it face to face with nature, rather than in second-

hand contact with man's copy of nature? We have before stated that no great artist is a copyist; his strength is not in his faultless imitation but in his expression of the great spirit-truths of nature. Therefore, pictures, if true, and if the production of the seer, unfold nature to us as it never would unfold itself to our unaided sense; they are revelations, and in the highest sense, educative. To be in possession of a great painting may be likened to being in the company of a great artist as he surveys some stretch of landscape, or looks into the fastnesses of some ravine. How instructive are his descriptions, how wonderful his interpretations, and how inspired his imaginings; how much more we see, how much more we feel for his companionship! But inasmuch as we cannot have such companionship in person, art enables us to have the companionship of his pictures, wherein he has told us in line and colour all that he would have told us in gesture and word. Ruskin tells us we may say "To the little and affected painter, 'stand aside, from between nature and me,' but to the great imaginative painter, greater a million times in every faculty of soul than we, our words may wisely be, 'come between this nature and me,—this nature which is too great, and too wonderful for me,—interpret it to me—let me see with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and have the help and strength of your great spirit.'"

Art, in its national function, is two fold:—it is related to morals, and it is related to use.

In its relation to morals, Ruskin claims for it a power to perfect—not produce—the ethical state of a people; given—says he, a right moral condition, and it will enhance and complete such condition; while in its relation to utility, it will give delightfulness to the implements of daily use, to materials of dress, to furniture and lodging, and make per-

manently visible much which otherwise could neither be described by science nor retained by memory.

The ever recurring refrain of Ruskin's writings for forty years has been :—apply the principles of art to the reformation of national life ; train your sons and daughters to see and to love the beautiful ; cultivate their higher instincts, call forth and feed their souls. Indeed, all his teaching concerning art is a mighty sermon on those apostolic words : "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are reverend, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are gracious ; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think of these things."

CHAPTER VIII.

Political Economy.

IT is with considerable reluctance that we approach this portion of Ruskin's teaching, not from any uncertainty as to the soundness of his conclusions, but from the fact that their exposition and enforcement invariably arouse impatience and rancour. Any one carefully read in his earlier writings will be prepared, if not expectant, for these last and crowning conclusions ; but to the commercial man, ignorant of Ruskin as a teacher, and saturated with the ideas of the modern economic school, they are incomprehensible and wild. The attitude of those who form the commercial circles towards this portion of his teachings is one of open and bitter antagonism ; they will listen patiently to him when he talks to them about pictures, but when he talks about political economy they gibe and oppose. The conflict has been long and severe, and harsh measures have been resorted to on both sides. The torrents of scorn, and the unsparing impeachment with which Ruskin has swept down upon what he deems the purblind selfishness of the moneyed classes, are among the finest passages of invective in the English language ; while the savage and desperate blows aimed in return, are proof that those attacked are not slow in standing on their own defence, nor in fighting for the privileges of their class. There can be little doubt that the protracted illness from which Ruskin is just recovering resulted from wounds received in the fray, while not a few of his opponents will carry to their grave the smart of many of his blows. However, when the battle is for truth the warfare is

healthful, and we would not for a moment suppose that either side does not in all sincerity believe in the principles for which it contends. Few even of Ruskin's opponents will question his honesty of purpose in propagating these principles; and few of his followers will refuse to grant honesty of purpose to the leader of the moneyed and mercantile school. In all controverted questions, where great principles are at stake, it behoves us to understand clearly the positions of either party, and to weigh calmly the statements advanced. It is to this end, and with unshaken faith in an Englishman's innate love of truth and fair-play, that we venture to unfold the views on Political Economy as taught by Ruskin, and compare them with those of the modern economic school.

The point of divergence is radical; it is not a question of detail, but of principle; and the practical embodiment of Ruskin's system would involve a complete revolution and re-adjustment in the commercial world. He has put the two positions in the following form:—"I wish the reader clearly and deeply to understand the difference between the two economics, to which the terms 'Political' and 'Mercantile' might not unadvisably be attached. Political Economy (the economy of a State, or of Citizens) consists simply in the production, preservation, and distribution, at fittest time and place, of useful or pleasurable things. The farmer who cuts his hay at the right time; the shipwright who drives his bolts well home in sound wood; the builder who lays good bricks in well-tempered mortar; the housewife who takes care of her furniture in the parlour, and guards against all waste in her kitchen; and the singer who rightly disciplines, and never overstrains her voice: are all political economists in the true or final sense; adding continually to the riches and well being of the nation to which they belong. But mercantile economy, the economy of 'merces or of pay,'

signifies the accumulation, in the hands of individuals, of legal or moral claim upon, or power over, the labour of others ; every such claim implying precisely as much poverty and debt on one side, as it implies riches or right on the other."

Here, then, are the distinctive roots of the two systems. The one defines wealth as that which is essentially valuable in the sustaining of life ; the other defines it as comparative and exclusive, and begotten by one class at the expense of another. Let us examine these distinctive roots, and then trace their practical outcome. For the sake of lucidity we will turn, first, to the position of the mercantile school.

Wealth, with the mercantile economist, stands for, or is represented by, any stock of articles that supply human wants. He does not consider the *nature* of such wants in their effect upon a people—only in their *supply*. Hence, if we ask him if the wants are normal ; or, if in their supply the welfare of a people is enhanced, his reply is—'political economy meets a demand, it has nothing whatever to do with its moral bearings ; the utility of an article is measured by its *profit* to the producer, not in its *effect* upon the consumer.' Thus, with him, a nation's desire lies at the root of a merchant's prosperity—such prosperity being proportionate to the merchant's powers of supply.

Now Ruskin would have us distinguish between the nature of a *want* and of a *need*, for therein lies the difference between darkness and light, death and life. Men *want* adulterated gin ; but they *need* pure air, healthy toil, and daily exercise. Women *want* fine feathers torn from the plumage of birds ; but they *need* warm clothing, and becoming ornament. Children *want* tarts and candies ; but they *need* wholesome oatmeal and new milk. A nation *wants* one hundred thousand rifles wherewith to mangle the manhood

and lay waste the villages of a neighbouring nation; but it *needs* good tools, and strong men, that it may conquer and command the natural forces of its own soil. Thus, selfishness and ignorance lie at the root of wants, nature at the root of needs.

Mercantile economy recognises this distinction and utilises the *want*, counting selfishness the economic motive. Thereupon it constructs its system of commercial enterprise, successful in proportion to its ability to meet the demands growing out of a people's wants, whatever those wants may be. A people cry out for cheap liquor, and the merchant who can supply their demand at the lowest possible rate is *supposed* to advance his own interests. A people seek for shoddy cloth, and the manufacturer of adulterated goods grows rich and becomes a supposedly prosperous man. The fickle fashion of a people fixes itself for the moment upon some fancy fabric as an article of dress, and while the fortunes of a few men who have a royalty on this speciality are secured, the trade of a town like Bradford is brought to ruin. Mercantile economists are logical, and acknowledge selfishness as the "economic motive;" Ruskin is logical, and shews its disastrous workings among the people at large.

But, say the economists, our work is not to educate, it is to supply. Turning upon Ruskin, and others, they exclaim:—"It is your work to elevate the masses; implant in them higher desires; transform their wants into needs, and we will delight to respond to the supply of their higher demands." (And, be it said, that few merchants of high moral tone delight in supplying that which destroys, or, which in its manufacture, is adulterated; they would rather put the best of their strength into life-giving articles, and genuine materials; but, as they say, they are embarked upon the stream, and to resist it would be ruin.) Ruskin accepts the challenge to educate

the masses, and right nobly has he striven to do so; but he thinks that masters, as well as men, are in need of education, and that in no relation of life are they so ignorant as in this. He wonders at the blindness of the economists in their willingness to supply that which is destructive alike to those who labour at its production, and those who participate in its consumption. Not only do they thus frustrate the end of those, who, by education, seek to raise the tone of a people's aspirations, but, what is worse, they sever, and wittingly keep apart, the functions of commerce and education. Ruskin insists that commerce is educative; that not only are the wants of a people confirmed in the production of articles that pander to them, but that this production has a reflex influence upon those engaged therein. Not only does the distiller of adulterated spirit confirm the intemperate habits of a nation, but the men he employs in such adulteration are slowly unmanned in following their work. The master *is* an educative factor; he may deny it, or seek to hide it, but the fact remains; and whoever makes the getting of money, on these terms, the end of his labour, is seeking individual enrichment at the cost of national beggary; he may be a mercantile economist, but a political economist he is not—he is a political impoverisher.

Thus, mercantile economy, according to Ruskin, is short-sighted, nay, one-eyed; it sees only its own interests, and those interests are accumulation; it is the science of how to get rich. It does not measure a nation's prosperity by its manhood, but by its riches. Steady markets, large profits, orders in advance, high rate of wage,—these are the measure of national prosperity. "No," says Ruskin, "you may have all this, and yet be poor; your riches may be corrupted, and your garments moth eaten; your gold and your silver may be rusted, and their rust be a testimony against you." Deeper

than material worth lies the question of moral sources. He says :—" It is impossible to conclude, of any given mass of acquired wealth, merely by the fact of its existence, whether it signifies good or evil to the nation in the midst of which it exists. Its real value depends on the moral sign attached to it, just as sternly as that of a mathematical quantity depends upon the algebraical sign attached to it. Any given accumulation of commercial wealth may be indicative, on the one hand, of faithful industries, progressive energies, and productive ingenuities; or, on the other, it may be indicative of mortal luxury, merciless tyranny, ruinous chicane. Some treasures are heavy with human tears, as an ill-stored harvest with untimely rain; and some gold is brighter in sunshine than it is in substance. And these are not, observe, merely moral or pathetic attributes of riches, which the seeker of riches may, if he choose, despise; they are literally and sternly, material attributes of riches, depreciating or exalting, incalculably, the monetary signification of the sum in question. One mass of money is the outcome of action which has created,—another, of action which has annihilated,—ten times as much in the gathering of it; such and such strong hands have been paralysed, as if they had been numbed by night-shade: so many strong men's courage broken, so many productive operations hindered; this and the other false direction given to labour, and lying image of prosperity set up, on Dura plains dug into seven-times-heated furnaces. That which seems to be wealth may in verity be only the gilded index of far-reaching ruin; a wrecker's handful of coin gleaned from the beach to which he has beguiled an argosy; a camp-follower's bundle of rags unwrapped from the breasts of goodly soldiers dead; the purchase-pieces of potter's fields, wherein shall be buried together the citizen and the stranger."

With Ruskin no system of economy is sound that does not take into consideration the question of moral source; and as we said at the commencement of the chapter, this is the great distinguishing feature which marks off his system of Political Economy from the modern system of Mercantile Economy.

It will be necessary now to glance at the outline of this system, noting its definitions, and testing its applications.

Just as domestic economy regulates the acts and habits of a household, so, he argues, political economy regulates those of a society or state, with reference to its maintenance; —political economy being neither an art nor a science; but a system of conduct and legislation founded on the sciences; directing the arts, and impossible, except under certain conditions of moral culture. By the term "maintenance of a state," he would have us understand "the support of its people in healthy and happy life; and the increase of their numbers, so far as that increase is consistent with their happiness. And whatever ministers to this multiplication of life at the highest standard, is of intrinsic and effectual value, —value being neither cost nor price, but the life-giving power of anything; while *cost* is the quantity of labour required to produce it, and *price* the quantity of labour which its possessor will take in exchange for it."

Wealth—or those things which are essentially valuable—consists of Land, Houses, Food, Books, and Works of Art. These constitute true wealth, and whenever a nation desires such wealth it desires it moderately, distributes it kindly, and possesses it with pleasure; whereas the nation desirous of false wealth desires it immoderately, and can neither dispense it with justice, nor enjoy it in peace.

The question now arises, by what great law is it to be

secured and distributed? and his reply is, by the law of Co-operation. "The highest and first law of the universe, and the other name of life, is, therefore, 'help.' The other name of death is 'separation.' Government and Co-operation are in all things, and eternally, the laws of life. Anarchy and competition, eternally, and in all things, the laws of death." "When I use the word 'Co-operation,' it is not meant to refer to these new constitutions of firms. I use the word in a far wider sense, as opposed, not to masterhood, but to *competition*. I do not mean, for instance, by Co-operation, that all the master bakers in a town are to give a share of their profits to the men who go out with the bread; but that the masters are not to try to undersell each other, nor seek each to get the other's business, but are all to form one society, selling to the public under a common law of severe penalty for unjust dealing, and at an established price. I do not mean that all banker's clerks should be partners in the bank; but I do mean that all bankers should be members of a great national body, answerable as a society for all deposits; and that the private business of speculating with other people's money should take another name than that of 'banking.' And, for final instance, I mean by 'Co-operation' not only fellowship between trading *firms*, but between trading *nations*; so that it shall no more be thought (as it is now, with ludicrous and vain selfishness) an advantage for one nation to undersell another, and take its occupation away from it; but that the primal and eternal law of vital commerce shall be of all men understood—namely, that every nation is fitted by its character, and the nature of its territories, for some particular employment or manufactures; and that it is the true interest of every other nation to encourage it in such speciality, and by no means to interfere with, but in all ways forward and protect, its efforts, ceas-

ing all rivalship with it, so soon as it is strong enough to occupy its proper place."

Such teaching appears impracticable to the modern mercantile economist: and why? Because he applies it in imagination to his own ideas of wealth, rather than to wealth as defined by Ruskin. Where wealth is deemed a supply of any article fitted to meet a people's wants, and where selfishness is acknowledged as the "economic motive," the law of Co-operation, as above defined, is madness—on the principle that it is madness to put a piece of new cloth into an old garment, or new wine into old bottles. But we must test Ruskin's laws by their application to his system. The question does not lie in the impracticability of Co-operation as applied to the present system of commerce, but the practicability or otherwise of Co-operation as applied to the system unfolded by Ruskin. We must decide what are, in reality, useful and life-giving things, and by what degrees and kinds of labour they are attainable and distributable. This is the question to be first settled, and afterwards we may test the practical nature of the laws essential for its production and distribution. When we are told, on the one hand, by a leading teacher in the modern economic school, that it is one thing to be *rich*, another thing to be enlightened, brave, or humane; and that the question, as to how a nation is to be made free, or eminent in literature, in fine arts, in arms, and in polity, is entirely distinct from the question of wealth; and, on the other hand, by Ruskin, that a nation is only rich as she knows how to discover, apply, accumulate, and distribute these, we must pause, and decide which teacher we will follow. We must first decide as to the truth of Ruskin's position, then adjudge as to the practical bearings of its details.

The great law of Co-operation is to be brought to bear

upon,—1st. The *application* of labour, or the obtaining of the most precious and lasting things; not growing oats where you can grow wheat, nor using iron where timber is durable; 2nd. *Preservation*, as the careful storage of wheat and timber from decay; and, 3rd. *Distribution*, as in storage of wheat where it is most needed, and timber within reach at time of call.

It will thus be seen that the system of Mercantile Economy seeks multiplication of exchangeable articles, while the system of Political Economy, as taught by Ruskin, seeks the multiplication of men. If the highest product of a nation is its men, if the truest economy aims at the extension of life, then it is not difficult for us to take sides; even those most ignorant of social and economic questions will be able to decide as to which position is most beneficial to a people, and most permanent to the interests of a State. Intrinsically considered, there is nothing of higher value to a nation than her sons. Whatever else she may possess—stretch of territory, store of treasure, strength of material power—if in their possession she has sacrificed or neglected her children she is poor, her birthright is bartered; and should the hour of her sorrow strike, she will find no place for repentance though she seek it with tears. We may, as a nation, point to our world-wide markets, our unwearying commercial enterprise, and to the fabulous fortunes built up by our so-called self-made men; but these cannot hush the strange whispers, nor lay low the unwelcome spectres, that in quiet hours, haunt our hearts. Deep down in the inner consciousness of the nation there is a sense of shame, a felt presentiment that the day of reckoning is at hand. When that day dawns will the nation be enabled to say, pointing to her countless children, "of them which thou hast given me I have lost none"; or, rather, will she not, beholding their ghastly shapes—manhood crippled

by the toil that kills, and womanhood wasted by the selfishness that consumes—cry out in despair "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Ruskin's controversy with the Bishop of Manchester on the question of usury now claims our notice. It is well known that Ruskin denounces the taking of any instalment, by way of interest, on money lent; and that the only payment he deems just is that of the repayment of principal borrowed. He bases this view upon two broad principles hard to gainsay:—first, that usury, or interest, contradicts the law of brotherhood; second, that eventually it is detrimental to borrower and lender alike.

The very fact that he bases his first position on the law of love, which recognises in every man a brother, puts him out of court with Political Economists. Knowing this, he thus forestalls their objection:—"Ordinary political economists would say,—it is indeed true that certain advantages of a general nature may be obtained by the development of the social affections. But political economists never professed, nor profess, to take advantage of a general nature into consideration. Our science is simply the science of getting rich."

But Ruskin cannot ignore the element of social affection in social action: he cannot overlook the *brother* in the man. Nor can he separate the principles of biblical teaching from the duties of every-day life. He finds in his Bible what he believes to be a condemnation of usury, and fails to discover in the laws of Moses, Jesus, and Paul, approval of the line of action that lends a thousand pounds at five per cent. per annum, and after the payment of a thousand pounds thereon for twenty years of interest, demands a thousand more by way of repayment of principal. We well know that the majority of men differ widely from Ruskin, not only in their interpretation of the Bible, but in setting aside the Bible as

a manual for business life; they assent to its inspiration, but, practically contravene it; or, at any rate, make it a matter of convenience as to the truths they adopt or abandon. Nevertheless, to mock at Ruskin because his morals of trade are based primarily upon the Sermon on the Mount, ill-becomes those who profess to be jealous for the honour of their Master.

There is, however, the further ground of its inutility as an educative factor. If life be not educational it is not worth the living; it becomes a curse, and degeneration its only law. The value of all life's actions is in their power to call forth faculties and feelings which widen our usefulness, intensify our joy, and perfect our manhood. The law of life is a law of growth, and all that contradicts or frustrates such law is a factor for death: such destructive forces are started in the system of loan on interest. When a man lends for selfish purposes what effect has the course of action upon his character? Does it not feed his acquisitiveness; has it not a tendency to lessen his effort in the field of manly toil, and prompt him to make out of his fellows a profit he might have secured from other and nobler sources? And further, does is not lead to indolence and inhumanity; is not the lender led by it eventually to make others work for him, and to grow harsher in the terms on which he demands the interest for the loan?

These, then, are the moral effects of usury upon the lender. It feeds his love of gain; it paralyses his skill as a workman by removing the spur to effort; it encourages indolence, and chokes the love and mercy which are the soul of humanity. Ruskin would not, for a moment, say that all men who had money out at interest were greedy, indolent, or heartless;—far from it. What he says is, that the moral effects of usury point to and further the development of these vices; and it would not be difficult to give instances, in our own time, of

men, who have through the effects of this system, become embodiments of the above-named vices.

Take the effects of usury upon the borrower. This is equally as harmful; he gains thereby no permanent advantage; feeling only immediate results, he considers not its after effects. Let the following words of Mr. Mackmurdo be carefully weighed :—" Its effect upon the borrower is quite as harmful. At first its poisonous nature and widely-harmful effect are not so keenly felt by the workers. They do not so clearly see its workings. 'The operation of capital is regarded by them only in its effect upon their immediate interests—not as its far more terrific power for evil in its appointment of the kind and object of labour.'

" But soon he begins to feel its effect upon himself. For some time he is able to fight against it; but as soon as it has got full swing, and obtains universal use, the borrower must grow poorer and weaker; the lender must get richer and stronger, it being, as we said, a game of certainties against uncertainties : 'it is heads I win, tails you lose.' "

But Ruskin shall be his own exponent. After speaking of the views held on this subject by Plato, Virgil, Dante, Victor Carpaccio and Shakspeare, he says :—" If after knowing these five men's opinions on practical matters (these five, as you will find, being of the same mind), you prefer to hold Mr. J. S. Mill's and Mr. Fawcett's opinion, you are welcome.

" Mr. Fawcett has stated that the interest of money consists of three distinct parts. 1. Reward for abstinence. 2. Compensation for the risks of loss. 3. Wages for the labour of superintendence.

" I will reverse this order in examining the statements; for the only real question is to the first, and we had better clear the other two away from it.

" 3. Wages for the labour of superintendence.

"By giving the capitalist wages at all, we put him at once into the class of labourers. . . . . So far as he is a labourer, of course, like any other, he is to be paid for his work. There is no question but that the partner who superintends any business, should be paid for superintendence; but the question before us is only respecting payment for doing nothing. I have, for instance, at this moment £15,000 of Bank Stock, and receive £1,200 a year, from the bank, but I have never received the slightest intimation from the directors that they wished for my assistance in the superintendence of that establishment. But even in cases where the partners are active, it does not follow that the one who has the most money in the business is either fittest to superintend it, or likely to do so; it is indeed probable that a man who has made money already will know how to make more; and it is necessary to attach some importance to property as the sign of sense: but your business is to choose and pay your superintendent for his sense, and not for his money. Which is exactly what Carlyle has been telling you for some time; and both he and all his disciples entirely approve of interest, if indeed you are prepared to define that term as payment for the exercise of common sense spent in the service of the person who pays it.

"2. Compensation for risk.

"Does Mr. Fawcett mean by compensation for risk, protection from it, or reward for running it? Every business involves a certain quantity of risk, which is properly covered by every prudent merchant, but he does not expect to make a profit out of his risks, nor calculate on a percentage on his insurance. If he prefers not to insure, does Professor Fawcett mean that his customers ought to compensate him for his anxiety; and that while the definition of the first

part of interest is extra payment for prudence, the definition of the second part is extra payment for *im*prudence? Or, does he mean, what is indeed often the fact, that interest for money represents such reward for risk as people may get across the green cloth at Homburg or Monaco? . . . . You cannot get anything out of Nature, or from God, by gambling;—only out of your neighbour: and to the quantity of interest of money thus gained, you are mathematically to oppose a precisely equal *dis*-interest of somebody else's money.

"These second and third reasons for interest then, assigned by Professor Fawcett, have evidently nothing whatever to do with the question. What I want to know is, why the Bank of England is paying me £1,200 a year? It certainly does not pay me for superintendence. And so far from receiving my dividend as compensation for risk, I put my money into the bank because I thought it exactly the safest place to put it in. But nobody can be more anxious than I to find it proper that I should have £1,200 a year. Finding two of Mr. Fawcett's reasons fail me utterly, I cling with tenacity to the third, and hope the best from it.

"The third, or first,—and now too sorrowfully the last—of the Professor's reasons, is this, that my £1,200 are given me as the 'reward of abstinence.' It strikes me upon this, that if I had not my £15,000 of bank stock, I should be a good deal more abstinent than I am, and that nobody would then talk of rewarding me for it. It might be possible to find even cases of very prolonged and painful abstinence, for which no reward has yet been adjudged by less abstinent England. Abstinence may, indeed, have its reward, nevertheless; but not by increase of what we abstain from, unless there be a law of growth for it, unconnected with our abstinence. 'You cannot have your cake and eat it.' Of course

not; and if you don't eat it you have your cake; but not a cake and a half. Imagine the complex trial of school boy minds, if the law of nature about cakes were, that if you ate none of your cake to-day, you would have ever so much bigger a cake to-morrow!—which is Mr. Fawcett's view of the law of nature about money, and, alas, many a man's beside,—it being no law of nature whatever, but absolutely contrary to all her laws, and not to be enacted by the whole force of united mankind. Not a cake and a quarter to-morrow, dunce, however abstinent you are—only the cake that you have—if the mice don't get at it in the night. Interest, then, is not, it appears, payment for labour; it is not reward for risk; it is not reward for abstinence. What is it? One of two things it is;—taxation, or usury!"

To most of us these views are visionary. And why so? We are contented with the relative conditions of our lot, and care not to be disturbed in either remembering what we are, or what we might and *ought* to become. We are "dead at heart, and tame in earth's paddock." "What shall we eat and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed";—after these things do we seek. Ruskin's system is absolute; it treats of men, and with their relations in life, in the light of Christianity; and it must stand or fall upon the possibility of brotherhood, and upon the reality of the Spirit of Love.

CHAPTER IX.

Moral Influences of Ruskin's Writings.

HAVING briefly outlined the life and teachings of John Ruskin, we purpose, in conclusion, to consider some of the moral influences exerted by his writings upon those who have given to them the careful study they demand. Though devoting himself in his earlier works to art criticism, and in his later ones to the discussion of social and economic questions, his authority, as a teacher, is not in any way restricted to their respective spheres. We have already seen that he has written much on many subjects; and such is his comprehensiveness of treatment, whatever the subject in hand, that few can read him without discovering in his writings suggestiveness and inspiration for every sphere of life. The eager and ever increasing demand for his books, the passionate devotion he arouses in his followers, and the repeated acknowledgments of indebtedness to him on the part of the leading men in all schools of thought and all branches of activity, lead us to search after the secret, and inquire into the nature of the power he exerts, and to ascertain, if possible, his rank among the teachers of his day.

We are often told his power over the reader lies in his style; and, in some measure, this is true: undoubtedly he is the most fascinating writer of his age. But to single out this as the only, or even the chief element, of his power, is to betray a superficial acquaintance with his teachings, and with the men they have most influenced. It is quite true there are many who turn to his works, not so much for what he has to say, as for the way in which he says it; and

this is a cause of deepest regret to him, and largely accounts for the changed style of his later writings. He tells us that owing to the necessity laid upon him to write much while he was young, and when he knew but half-truths, there arose a fondness for clothing his ideas in what he thought were fine words. "People used to call me a good writer then: now, they say, I cannot write at all; because, for instance, if I think anybody's house is on fire, I only say, 'Sir, your house is on fire.' Whereas formerly I used to say, 'Sir, the abode in which you probably passed the delightful days of youth, is in a state of inflammation.' And everybody used to like the effect of the two *ps* in 'probably passed,' and of the two *ds* in 'delightful days.'"

While there may be some truth in this jocular self-criticism, aimed alike at himself and at his readers, yet those who have felt the fascination and inspiration of his earlier writings will neither forget them, nor cease to read them. They are the outflowing of a young soul, brim-full of admiration, hope, and love. They pulse with the early life which cometh from the womb of the morning; they are fresh with the dew of youth. There is a frankness, an enthusiasm, a passion in them, entrancing the reader, enflaming the student, and moving even the heart of the critic. In his later writings there is an increase of severity; there is more of the strength which comes from restraint, and of the sadness which is the inheritance of years; yet this restraint and sadness lend a point and power which we fail to find in the writings of his earlier years.

Both these styles are peculiarly his own. It is true he acknowledges his indebtedness to Hooker and Herbert, whom he made his earlier models; and to Carlyle and Helps whom he has chosen as the guides of much of his later thinking; nevertheless, all he says, bears his own image

and superscription. In all his writings the prophetic and poetical elements are discoverable; in the same sentence the moral and æsthetic side of truth is seized—a stroke of his pen puts before us what we are to *do* and what we are to *love*. It may be said of him as a writer, "strength and beauty are in his right hand:" a clearness patent to all, a conviction irresistible by few, and an attractiveness of setting, which seizes the imagination and wins the heart—these are characteristics which most readers must, from time to time, discover.

For example, take the following from "The Crown of Wild Olive," as illustrative of clearness. Can anything surpass this definition of work and play? "Now, roughly, not with vain subtlety of definition, but for plain use of the words, play is an exertion of body or mind, made to please ourselves, and with no determined end; and work is a thing done because it ought to be done, and with a determined end. You play, as you call it, at cricket, for instance. That is as hard work as anything else; but it amuses you, and it has no result but the amusement. If it were done as an ordered form of exercise, for health's sake, it would become work directly. So, in like manner, whatever we do to please ourselves, and only for the sake of the pleasure, not for an ultimate object, is 'play,' the pleasing thing, not the useful thing."

Or, take an illustration of the convincing, yet attractive, method of setting truth. Speaking in the same lecture of English games, horse-racing and sportmanship, he says:—"Through horse-racing, you get every form of what the higher classes everywhere call Play; that is, gambling: and through game-preserving, you get some curious laying out of ground; that beautiful arrangement of dwelling-house for man and beast, by which we have grouse and black-cock—so many

brace to the acre, and men and women—so many brace to the garret." But note the attractiveness of style in which the truth is set:—"I often wonder what the angelic builders and surveyors—the angelic builders who build the many mansions up above there; and the angelic surveyors who measure that four-square city with their measuring reeds—I wonder what they think, or are supposed to think, of the laying out of grounds by this nation, which has set itself, as it seems, literally to accomplish, word for word, or rather fact for fact, in the persons of these poor whom its Master left to represent Him, what that Master said of Himself—that foxes and birds had homes but he had none."

But Ruskin's style is neither the sole, nor main secret of his power. Indeed, those whom he influences most, care but little for his style in comparison with the truths unfolded. No doubt the arrestive method in which he writes draws many to the reading of his books, but they do not read very far ere they are conscious of a power other than that of style; and if we mean to bottom Ruskin's influence we must set ourselves to the discovery of this power which most of his readers acknowledge, and which all his readers feel.

In the first place he is an interpreter of nature. He takes the visible garment of creation, and after telling its threads and shewing its colours, lifts it aside, and reveals the soul which breathes within. Turning to nature's book, he spells out words new in meaning, and makes known things kept secret from the vulgar gaze of man. There are many to whom the heavens declared no glory and the earth unfolded no poem, until his writings opened their eyes to see and their hearts to feel; many, who never saw the beauty of cloud-form, nor knew the majesty of the hills, nor felt the sweetness of the meadows until taught by him in "Modern

Painters." But, since they have sat at his feet, no spot in nature is common, no object in nature unclean. Herein lies much of his power: he can bring back to us the wonder of childhood; he is, in this sense, the restorer of paradise; we feel that, after all, "Earth's crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God"; and that in spite of the indifference begotten by commerce, and the doubt confirmed by science, "the earth *is* the Lord's and the fulness thereof: the world and they that dwell therein."

The one who can unveil Divine meanings in creation, and invest with significance unobserved though familiar objects, is bound to have a hold upon men. And this is what Ruskin does for us—he is nature's prophet. Listen to him as he would teach us of cloud-form:—"It is a strange thing how little in general people know about the sky. It is the part of creation in which nature has done more for the sake of pleasing man, more for the sole and evident purpose of talking to him, and teaching him, than in any other of her works, and it is just the part in which we least attend to her. Every *essential* purpose of the sky might, so far as we know, be answered, if once in three days or thereabouts, a great, ugly, black rain-cloud were brought up over the blue, and everything well watered, and so all left blue again till next time, with perhaps a film of morning and evening mist for dew. And, instead of this, there is not a moment of any day of our lives, when nature is not producing scene after scene, picture after picture, glory after glory, and working still upon such exquisite and constant principles of the most perfect beauty, that it is quite certain it is all done for us, and intended for our perpetual pleasure. And every man, wherever placed, however far from other sources of interest or of beauty, has this doing for him constantly. The sky is fitted in all its functions for the perpetual comfort

and exalting of the heart, for the soothing it and purifying it from its dross and dust. Sometimes gentle, sometimes capricious, sometimes awful, never the same for two moments together; almost human in its passions, almost spiritual in its tenderness, almost divine in its infinity."

Or take his interpretation of the spirit of the rocks. Speaking of the precipice, he says:—"A group of trees changes the colour of its leafage from week to week, and its position from day to day; it is sometimes languid with heat, and sometimes heavy with rain; the torrent swells or falls in shower or sun; the best leaves of the foreground may be dined upon by cattle, or trampled by unwelcome investigators of the chosen scene. But the cliff can neither be eaten, nor trampled down; neither bowed by the shadow, nor withered by the heat: it is always ready for us when we are inclined to labour; will always wait for us when we would rest; and, what is best of all, will always talk to us when we are inclined to converse. With its own patient and victorious presence, cleaving daily through cloud after cloud, and reappearing still through the tempest drift, lofty and serene amidst the passing rents of blue, it seems partly to rebuke, and partly to guard, and partly to calm and chasten, the agitations of the feeble human soul that watches it; and that must be indeed a dark perplexity, or a grievous pain, which will not be in some degree enlightened or relieved by the vision of it, when the evening shadows are blue on its foundation, and the last rays of the sunset resting on the fair height of its golden Fortitude."

If we turn to the meadows, his words are equally suggestive:—"Gather a single blade of grass, and examine for a minute, quietly, its narrow sword-shaped strip of fluted green. Nothing, as it seems there, of notable goodness or beauty. A very little strength, and a very little tallness, and a few

delicate long lines meeting in a point—not a perfect point neither, but blunt and unfinished, by no means a creditable, or apparently much-cared-for example of nature's workmanship; made, only to be trodden on to-day, and to-morrow to be cast into the oven; and a little pale and hollow stalk, feeble and flaccid, leading down to the dull brown fibres of roots. And yet, think of it well, and judge whether of all the gorgeous flowers that beam in summer air, and of all strong and goodly trees,—stately palm and pine, strong ash and oak, scented citron and burdened vine,—there be any by man so deeply loved, by God so highly graced, as that narrow point of feeble green. And well does it fulfil its mission. Consider what we owe merely to the meadow grass, to the covering of the dark ground by that glorious enamel, by the companies of those soft, and countless, and peaceful spears. . . . . All spring and summer is in them—the walks by silent, scented paths—the rests in noonday heats—the joy of herds and flocks—the power of all shepherd life and meditation—the life of sunlight upon the world, falling in emerald streaks, and falling in soft blue shadows, where else it would have struck upon the dark mould, or scorching dust."

Or, again, take the following description of a stone:—"A stone, when it is examined, will be found a mountain in miniature. The fineness of Nature's work is so great, that, into a single block, a foot or two in diameter, she can compress as many changes of form and structure, on a small scale, as she needs for her mountains on a large one; and, taking moss for forests, and grains of crystal for craggs, the surface of a stone, in by far the plurality of instances, is more interesting than the surface of an ordinary hill; more fantastic in form, and incomparably richer in colour."

Who can read works from which the above extracts are

taken, and of which they are not exceptional but general examples, without having a clearer vision and warmer heart for those great works of which it is said, "In wisdom hath He made them all."

Ruskin also possesses the power, peculiar to the few great of every age, of so putting his soul into his writings that through them he gets at the souls of his readers. Of his words it may be said, they are spirit, and they are life. They are correctives to indolence, and sources of renewal to those engaged in noble enterprise; they come as impulses, not stimulants which intoxicate,—but nutriment, feeding resolve, and giving staying power to life. However feeble a man may be, they bid him remember he is called for, and capable of work; however lowly his lot, they teach him how he may find happiness therein; they make the son of toil conscious of the dignity of labour, and convince the disappointed and hopeless that no good thing is ever done in vain; the thoughtful find in them truths opening out fields of suggestiveness, and the weary may turn to them for restoration of strength. We well remember towards the close of a day of disappointment and gloom—a day in which life seemed crowded with mockeries and failure—reading, for the first time, the following words:—"Life is real,—not evanescent nor slight. It does not vanish away; every noble life leaves the fibre of it, for ever, in the work of the world; by so much, evermore, the strength of the human race has gained." Many a time since then we have quoted this passage to down-hearted men, and many a time in life's dark hours repeated it to ourselves, and its strength has been ever sure. There are some teachers who interest us, others who dispirit us, but Ruskin's words bring life; and whenever we are engaged at our life-appointed work we know of few, if any, more helpful and more inspiriting. True,

he discourages all futile and unnatural effort, and shews scant sympathy towards those dissatisfied with their rank, or eager to emulate that which they can never become. But for those prepared to work with all their might at their God-appointed task, there, where they are, and whatever it may be, the writings of John Ruskin will aid mightily in establishing the work of the hands.

His writings are also characterised by a spirituality of tone. They are free from the materialising influences common to so much of the teaching of the present age; their tendency is to purify and ennoble, to enthrone duty, reveal goodness and encourage in "admiration, hope, and love." He seeks to rescue man from the engrossing spirit of greed, and woman from the life of frivolity and fashion. He has a profound reverence for the God of his fathers, and firmly holds a belief in the unseen. Righteousness with him is no slowly evolved quality, but a Divine principle, eternal and unchangeable; and right and wrong no relative conditions but absolute, and for ever fixed in heaven. Indeed, he has said that if we ask ourselves why we are to do the right, and why leave undone the wrong, we disgrace ourselves in the asking. He hates utilitarianism in morals, and warns men that did they even perish like the brutes this would be no excuse for fleshly lives. In what sermon have you more powerful or spiritual teaching than the following:—"Mighty of heart, mighty of mind—'magnanimous'—to be this, is indeed to be great in life; to become this increasingly, is, indeed, to 'advance in life,'—in life itself—not in the trappings of it. My friends, do you remember that old Scythian custom, when the head of a house died? How he was dressed in his finest dress, and set in his chariot, and carried about to his friend's houses; and each of them placed him at his table's head, and all feasted in

his presence! Suppose it were offered to you in plain words, as it *is* offered to you in dire facts, that you should gain this Scythian honour, gradually, while you yet thought yourself alive. Suppose the offer were this: You shall die slowly; your blood shall daily grow cold; your flesh petrify; your heart beat at last only as a rusted group of iron valves. Your life shall fade from you, and sink through the earth into the ice of caina; but, day by day, your body shall be dressed more gaily, and set in higher chariots, and have more orders on its breast—crowns on its head, if you will. Men shall bow before it, stare and shout round it, crowd after it up and down the streets; build palaces for it, feast with it at their table's heads all the night long; your soul shall stay enough within it to know what they do, and feel the weight of the golden dress on its shoulders, and the furrow of the crown-edge on the skull;—no more. Would you take the offer, verbally made by the death-angel? Would the meanest amongst us take it, think you? Yet practically and verily we grasp at it, every one of us, in a measure; many of us grasp at it in its fulness of horror. Every man accepts it who desires to advance in life without knowing what life is; who means only that he is to get more horses, and more footmen, and more fortune, and more public honour, and—*not* more personal soul. He only is advancing in life, whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into Living peace."

Is there not a depth of spirituality in that teaching? To thoughtful readers it is everything when an author can give increased spirituality of tone to life. The world's levels are so low, and manhood so weighted down, that it needs a well-nigh superhuman effort on our part to see the stars. John Henry Newman has said, "The world forgets that men have souls." This is too often true of the world's teachers. They

tickle and tease, and delight to tell us we are only dust, or that dust is the only thing worth living for. But if there be a supreme influence flowing out of Ruskin's writings it is the influence which ennobles and spiritualizes, which reminds us we were born in the Divine image for Divine ends.

And lastly, Ruskin throws a flood of light upon the Scriptures. Though making no claim to biblical exegesis, many of his passing comments are marked by critical acumen and expository genius. His interpretation of the XIX. Psalm in the fifth volume of "Modern Painters;" his lucid passages on "Thy kingdom come," and "Except ye be converted and become as little children," in "The Crown of Wild Olive," together with his discourses on the adoration of the Shepherds and of the Magi before the Child-King at Bethlehem, and others in "Fors Clavigera" are examples of what may be found in all parts of his works. His power to make a verse of Scripture interpret a phenomenon in nature, his apt method of reducing prophetic and apostolic principles to every-day life, and his unrivalled skill of interweaving sacred phraseology with his own, make his writings suggestive and interpretive of the greatest of all books. Indeed, it may be said, Ruskin writes as much for preachers as for artists; and we question whether he has not, in spite of cleric scorn, had as powerful an influence in the pulpit as in the studio. We are not asserting too much when we say that in "Modern Painters" there is more religion—both natural and revealed—than can be found in many a compendium of theology enforced upon the student of divinity in his college days; while the "Seven Lamps of Architecture," and the "Stones of Venice" contain as searching analyses of the human heart as any work on Moral Science. Viewed as a religious teacher he may be said to possess more of the Hebrew Prophet than of the Galilean Apostle; and he has ever

proved himself to be as deep a seer into the Divine Word as he is a true interpreter of the Divine Works.

Most people grant him a place among the front rank teachers of his day. As an art critic he stands unrivalled; and as a moral force in the realm of literature he has but one compeer, the late Thomas Carlyle, whom he recognises as "master." As a prose-poet he yet remains, in an age fertile in literary genius, an acknowledged leader among his fellows.

Such then are the influences, and such the position which we assign to John Ruskin. As to whether his system, in its entirety, will ever be adopted, it is not our business to say; enough for us that Ruskin has said that it will stand or fall upon the truthfulness, or otherwise, of the three following positions:—Whether there be One true and living God, or no God at all; whether the old English Faith be true or false; and whether the voice of his own deepest soul has been the voice of truth, or a mere imagination and a lie. But his system is so many-sided that it can be, and is being, adopted in part, if not in whole; and not one of the least promising tokens of success is in the present endeavour of a few thoughtful men in our large centres of population, as well as in many a quieter sphere, to fulfil in their own life, and so far as they can, to carry out among the multitude, many of the principles enforced in his writings. Their aim is simple and unpretentious; they seek to cultivate the heart, train the hand, improve the environment, and strengthen the bond of brotherhood. It is in the hope that their number may be multiplied, and their work somewhat established that this sketch of Ruskin's Life and Teaching is now sent forth. If it should lead any reader to turn to the pages from which it has borrowed its light, or add a single disciple to the ranks of him whose teaching it so imperfectly outlines, it will answer its end, and more than repay the toil of its preparation.

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